

TRIBUTE

Joseph Biederman, MD

A Champion of Clinical Science

Craig Bruce Hackett Surman, MD

UP UNTIL HIS RECENT PASSING, Joseph Biederman (CHADD Hall of FAME, inducted 1995) was an explorer, teacher, and champion of the clinical science of ADHD. The way we understand mental functioning is built on the work of a vast number of researchers and clinicians like him. These are individuals who have committed themselves not just to alleviating suffering as healers, but to explore how we can do that better.

Dr. Biederman was highly productive among such explorers, and helped countless others find their way in a world of new tools and techniques that now shape modern clinical care. His intimate involvement in the study of ADHD offers a chance to reflect on how far the science of ADHD has come in the last few decades.

A doctor in training might hear the phrase “see one, do one, teach one” describing the core process that allows medical knowledge to spread. Procedures like doing a blood draw or taking a blood pressure are adopted across providers by observing how they are done, trying it themselves, and then showing other people how to do them. But there are so many possible ways of approaching the suffering that people have—how do we know which problems we can help people with, and what interventions help people most? This metaquestion takes a whole separate effort to answer, and this is where clinician-researchers like Dr. Biederman help the rest of us figure out best practices—using science.

Clinical scientific research takes much time and effort, and collaboration. Dr. Biederman was perhaps one of the most obvious examples of such collaboration, having been a part of over 700 research publications on ADHD,

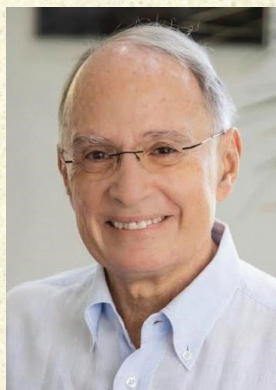
according to a simple recent search on PubMed. Behind each of those publications is a vast network of committed professionals that he was a part of that answered questions his peers, who reviewed and authorized those publications, felt needed to be addressed.

Here are some of the questions his collaborations helped answer. Is ADHD a biological disorder? (YES) Is it inheritable? (YES) Does ADHD persist into adulthood? (YES)

Does ADHD exist in girls and women? (YES) Do medications alleviate symptoms of ADHD? (YES) Can cognitive behavioral therapy reduce the burden of ADHD? (YES) Does presence of ADHD increase risk for and complicate presentations of mood disorders, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, learning disorders, eating disorders, anxiety disorders, and autism disorders? (YES) Is ADHD associated with emotional self-regulation challenges? (YES)

These answers are clear, because they have been replicated across multiple research groups. But other critical questions asked in the last few decades have left less definitive answers. For example: Do tests of brain function correlate with diagnosis

of ADHD? The answer is sometimes. While the definition of ADHD used by clinicians is purely related to symptom pattern over time, it would be so nice if there was a definitive neuropsychological test pattern, a particular brain activity pattern, or a particular shape of brain parts that perfectly matched the pattern of symptoms. But the science shows that there is no one pattern—diverse patterns of operation in different brain regions can produce the same presentation of symptoms. Brain regions involved in attention appear to operate differently in children and adults with ADHD, but it is not one pattern, or one region. It has taken years of work by clinician-scientists like



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Dr. Biederman to show this and to explore the promise and limits of brain tests.

Like many researchers eager to find answers, Dr. Biederman was open to the new tools of the last few decades. He embraced and explored the limits of the new diagnostic criteria that placed inattentive ADHD as relevant with the advent of DSM-IV, new medications that changed inattentive and impulsive-hyperactive symptoms, and new brain imaging and neuropsychological measurement methods. With advent of SMS (text messaging), he championed exploring how an app could help patients stay connected to the treatments that helped them.

But one of his greatest gifts to the field of ADHD was a quite old-fashioned one: creation of educational programs where other clinicians could “see” how to help others, so they could move on to doing and teaching. He was a founding member of the American Professional Society of ADHD and Related Disorders (APSARD), a forum for the continued grounding of ADHD assessment and treatment in science.

When a clinician wants to know how to help a person in front of them that struggles to control how they behave and follow the expectations of the people around them, we now have answers for those clinicians, thanks to the work of Dr Biederman and so many others like him. In partnership with CHADD and other groups, APSARD is currently developing guidelines for adult ADHD treatment—itsself a tool that can help bring the results of the critical clinical science that Dr Biederman championed more broadly into practice.

His work offers a clear legacy of the value of grounding the answers to our questions about ADHD in science. As we continue to explore the new tools and ways of disseminating them in an era of rapid information sharing, everyone deserves to know what is actually likely to help them—and to have access to those supports and treatments. 🗨



Craig Bruce Hackett Surman, MD, is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is the scientific coordinator of the adult ADHD research program of the clinical and research program in pediatric psychopharmacology at Massachusetts General Hospital. His research strives to improve the assessment and treatment of self-regulatory disorders, including ADHD, in adulthood. He completed a residency in psychiatry at the Harvard Longwood Psychiatry Residency Training Program in Boston, as well as a fellowship in neuropsychiatry at the division of cognitive and behavioral neurology at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, also in Boston. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals and presented internationally. Dr. Surman has directed or facilitated over forty studies related to ADHD in adults. He is the coauthor of FASTMINDS: How to Thrive If You Have ADHD (or Think You Might) and the editor of ADHD in Adults: A Practical Guide to Evaluation and Management.

Marlene Snyder, PhD

A Tireless Advocate for Children

Maureen Gill, LCSW, ACC, and
Zara Harris, MS, OT

TODAY WE PAY TRIBUTE TO A WOMAN who was special to so many people. Her recent death is a loss not only for her family but for the whole world. Marlene Snyder, PhD, was a national and international champion for two great causes: ADHD and bullying. She was a farm girl who grew up to be a teacher and who later pursued her doctorate in education. She became a professor at the University of Nebraska and a research associate professor at Clemson University.

She joined CHADD in the early 1990s for family reasons and soon began to volunteer, helping CHADD at the national level with the education of parents and school staff. She gave numerous local and national workshops and wrote articles about how to help children with ADHD in the classroom. After the pivotal moment in 1991, when children with ADHD were granted eligibility for special education services under the other health impaired category, she was asked to serve on CHADD’s board of directors and to chair the education and public policy committee.

One of the pioneers in promoting ADHD school training for both parents and school staff, Dr. Snyder also became aware of other training needs. Her book *ADHD and Driving: A Guide for Parents of Teens with ADHD* was published in 2001. It was the first book on the topic and helped many frazzled parents. Then the mother of a teen with ADHD, she spoke from experience and yet used her sound wisdom and research experience to put practical words around difficult subjects.

She wrote about the research on teen drivers with ADHD, who, not surprisingly, were more likely than peers to have speeding offenses, traffic violations, accidents, and license suspensions. She reviewed the literature on driving from Germany and New Zealand as well as the USA. She advised parents on what to do to make sure their teen does not become one of those grim statistics. She illustrated the book with practical examples, charts, and

“Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character that inspires confidence.”

—Field Marshal B. Montgomery

forms—including a driving observation form, a chart for teens to earn driving privileges, and a chapter on what to do when it isn't going well and there has been an accident or suspended license. Twenty years later, this book is still pertinent, and there are copies available on Amazon. Every parent of a teen with ADHD should have a copy.

A world traveler who visited 57 countries in her lifetime, Dr. Snyder saw the need for ADHD education in other countries and began doing workshops and sharing articles overseas. She was a pioneer in that sphere as well. How was she able to do accomplish so much? Well, she was one of those special people that you meet in your lifetime. She was someone who brightened a room when she walked in. She was wise and generous with her thoughts and knowledge. She was also the parent of a child with ADHD and personally knew how difficult it can be. Her husband, Lee, said that she had compassion, was an avid listener, and had a great ability to focus and process how to get from A to B in projects she undertook. She had great wisdom and respect for others.

Dr. Snyder saw another need in the world: the prevention of bullying. She decided to work toward that end with Susan Limber, PhD, at Clemson University's Family and Neighborhood Life program in the national movement to prevent bullying using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. She became a “pillar [in] the early efforts in the United States to raise attention to bullying among children and youth and reduce its prevalence.” She was one of their first trainers and coauthored the teacher and schoolwide guides. She mentored scores of trainers and was the point of contact for the program in the United States. She also served as the first president of the International Bullying Prevention Association. Dr. Limber called her a fantastic communicator; the size of the audience did not matter, be it a school district, a parent, or a school counselor. She was very approachable, other-cen-



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tered, and focused on the goals and not herself. Her experience in education was a major asset to the bullying programs.

Marlene Snyder was a valuable player in the world of ADHD and she will be greatly missed. She touched so many people's lives through her writing and her many training sessions for educators, parent education organizations, mental health providers, child welfare groups and juvenile justice agencies. CHADD is deeply grateful for her tremendous efforts to improve our world.

Those who knew Marlene personally are reminded of a saying from one of her favorite authors, Maya Angelou: “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” She was a blessing to us all. **A**



As a licensed clinical social worker, **Maureen Gill** has spent her career working in medical, rehab, and psychiatric hospitals—and, more recently, as an ADHD coach. She served as a parent consultant for the American Academy of Pediatrics workgroup that produced the first ADHD toolkit for medical offices. She served on CHADD's national board of directors as co-chair of the education committee, and was instrumental in the formation of the Northern Virginia ADHD Partnership training program that provided countywide training on ADHD to schools from 1991 to 2011. The former chair of the editorial advisory board for *Attention* magazine, she received CHADD's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021.



A friend of Marlene Snyder and fellow pioneer in the world of ADHD, **Zara Harris** serves as deputy co-chair of *Attention's* editorial advisory board and a member of CHADD's conference committee. With over thirty years of experience as a pediatric occupational therapist, she is licensed in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Specializing in helping students who are struggling with handwriting, homework, attention, time management, and organization, she has worked with international schools on three different continents.