



**GIRLS WITH AD/HD IN
ACADEMIC SETTINGS: WHAT
EDUCATORS SHOULD KNOW.**

**Dr. Geraldine Farrelly, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.,
Developmental Paediatrician
& Dr. Meadow Schroeder, R. Psych
October, 2017**

RATIONALE

- There are unique challenges in diagnosing ADHD in females

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize similarities and differences between females and males with ADHD.
2. Increase awareness and knowledge of ADHD and co-existing disorders in females.
3. Review role of the educator in Identification and management.

DISCLOSURE

- A member of the Speakers Bureau and advisor panels for:
 - Janssen Ortho,
 - Shire Canada
 - Purdue

3 CORE CRITERIA OF AD/HD

Inattention

- Easily distracted
- Losing/forgetting
- Wandering thoughts
- Organization
- Careless errors
- Poor listening
- Task avoidance

Impulsivity

- Acting without thinking
- Interrupting
- Can't wait turn

Hyperactivity

- Fidgety
- Overactive
- Out of seat
- Excessive talking

NEUROBIOLOGY OF ADHD

- Substantial evidence that there is a genetic link
- Very little evidence: social factors or parenting
- Emerging evidence: environment (even prenatal) on severity of ADHD; not causal
- Can be a secondary symptom
 - Trauma → PTSD → ADHD-like behaviours

IDENTIFICATION RATES

Boys > Girls

3:1

Myth?

REASON 1

- Hyperactive/impulsive
- Inattentive

REASON 2: CHECKLISTS

Hyperactivity

- Fidgets
- Leaves seat
- Runs about/climbs
- Difficulty playing quietly
- On the go

Hyperactivity in Girls

- Classroom helper
- Excessive talking
- “Dramatic”
- Hyper-social
- Tom-boy

CHECKLISTS

Inattention

- Does not follow through on tasks
- Avoids task that require effort
- Loses things
- Forgetful in daily activities

Symptoms mediated in Girls

- Does with great effort to please
- Procrastinates but finishes at the last minute
- Parents help with organization
- Friends help with reminders and with assignments

SNAP

Sample Items	Not at all	Just a little	Quite a bit	Very much
Often fails to give close attention details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or tasks				
Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities				
Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities				

CHALLENGES

Dr. G Farrelly & Dr. M Schroeder;
October 2017

REASON 3

- Misidentification

EXAMPLE: ANXIETY AS A SECONDARY SYMPTOM

HORMONES

- Influence of thyroid
- Estrogen fluctuations

- Effect on medication?

THE MISDIAGNOSED: ANXIOUS ANNY

“I START MY HOMEWORK AND BEFORE I KNOW IT,
I’M RESEARCHING MAKE-UP VIDEOS.”

Dr. G Farrelly & Dr. M Schroeder;
October 2017

THE OVERLOOKED: SOCIAL SUSIE

“My teacher gets annoyed with me for talking, but I’m just asking my friend for help.”

THE OVERLOOKED: SWEET SALLY

“I do my homework, but I forget to hand it in. My teacher doesn’t believe me.”

THE UNDIAGNOSED: BETTY BRIGHT

“My mom has stopped running home to grab my ballet slippers.”

THE MISDIAGNOSED: RISKY RHONDA

“I don’t want to have to do that. That is boring.”

EMERGING RESEARCH

- Neuropathology

WHAT EDUCATORS SHOULD KNOW

- Each youth is unique
- No profile is the same
- Coping skills/strategy use

**teacher descriptions are invaluable

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS: OBSERVATIONS

- Response to learning
- Academic progress
 - Reading, writing, mathematics

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS: OBSERVATIONS

- Social Interactions
- Emotions

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Educators should now have a better understanding of:
 - Presentation of ADHD in females
 - Co-existing conditions
 - Importance of early identification
 - The crucial role they play in assessment of ADHD

RESOURCES

1. *100 questions & answers about attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in women and girls* (2011). P. Quinn
2. *The girls' guide to ADHD: Don't lose this book!* (2004). B. Walker
3. *Attention, girls: A guide to learn all about your AD/HD.* (2009). P. Quinn & C. Pearce.
4. Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance (CADDRA)
<http://www.adhdfamilies.ca/content/caddra-canadian-adhd-resource-alliance>