

Research News



FYI

THE ADHD BRAIN

Researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School report that the amygdala, the part of the brain associated with emotional processing and motivation, is smaller in both children and adults with ADHD.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

A review of 174 studies of behavioral treatments published in *Clinical Psychology Review* concludes that behavioral treatments are highly effective for managing ADHD.

AUDITORY PROCESSING

According to *The ADHD Report*, research indicates there is a high degree of overlap between symptoms of ADHD and auditory processing disorder.

MAXIMIZING OUTCOMES

The *Journal of Adolescent Psychopharmacology* reports that using rating scales for monitoring medication dosages results in the best therapeutic outcomes.

The ADHD Report highlights emotional impulsivity as a diagnostic sign of ADHD **Emotional Control and ADHD**

To date, the diagnostic criteria for ADHD has not included emotional impulsivity and emotional self-regulation as core components of the disorder. Researchers are now calling for deficient emotional self-regulation, DESR, to take its rightful place in the clinical definition of attention disorders as a major, not an associated, feature.

This thinking is based on long-term research findings which indicate that the signs of DESR are significant contributors to difficulties in family, teacher and peer relationships that can persist into adulthood. The signs of DESR include:

- ▶ **low frustration tolerance**
- ▶ **quickness to anger**
- ▶ **impatience**
- ▶ **becoming easily excitable**
- ▶ **difficulty self-soothing**
- ▶ **difficulty attending to tasks**
- ▶ **overly intense emotionality**

Seeing emotional impulsivity as a potential sign of an attention disorder rather than as a behavioral or emotional disorder can be helpful for educators and clinicians as it can prevent children and adolescents from being misunderstood or incorrectly treated.

College students and ADHD **College Students**

Researchers from Duke University report that, while the majority of college students with ADHD take medication as

prescribed, a significant minority may not. The researchers report that undergraduates who believe that their symptoms compromise their ability to study effectively are more likely to experiment with increased doses of their medication. This study highlights the need for ongoing evaluation and treatment of attention disorders during the college years.

A new medication becomes available **Intuniv released in 2009**

In September 2009, Shire pharmaceuticals announced the FDA approval of a new nonstimulant medication called Intuniv for the treatment of ADHD. The active ingredient, guanfacine, has been previously used for regulating blood pressure. The most notable side effect is feeling tired or lethargic but researchers from SUNY Upstate Medical Center report that these symptoms tend to dissipate over time.

***The Center for Attention Disorders** offers comprehensive evaluation, treatment, learning support and consultation for children, adolescents and adults not only with attention disorders, but also for those experiencing learning or social-emotional difficulties. We publish an annual research update at the start of each academic year for clinicians and educators to note the past year's important findings, and an informational newsletter for parents. Please visit our website for additional information, or feel free to contact us by phone or email.*