

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: analysing an illusion

Craig Newnes

SUMMARY: ADHD is an invalid and unreliable construct used to describe undesirable conduct in children and adolescents. The label brings financial and cultural capital to its users and a variety of advantages as well as disadvantages to the families and class-rooms of those inscribed.

KEY WORDS: ADHD, inscription, Ritalin, psychometrics, cocaine

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a way of describing unwanted and asocial conduct including inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness, all of which are judged by the observer's notions of what constitutes extreme behaviour. This conduct is frequently observed when a child starts school; it was previously called naughtiness. The conduct is commonly inscribed as ADHD between the ages of six and twelve; so-called Adult ADHD has become a common inscription for those over the age of 17. The most frequent response is medication. Conduct typical of ADHD is normal in boys under seven, hence boys are more than twice as likely to be inscribed as girls.

History

In the case of ADHD a retrospective reading of material concerning children's conduct through the lens of diagnosis requires an acknowledgement that expectations on children in regard to education, health and productivity/

Craig Newnes is a Consulting Critical Psychologist, editor and author. His latest books are *A Critical A-Z of Electroshock* and *Paris: a novel* both Real Press, 2018

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