

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF *ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER* (ADHD) FOR THE PUBLIC AND EDUCATORS**

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### *Abstract*

*This study uses a literature study method with a descriptive qualitative approach to provide deep insight into the phenomenon of ADHD, identify needs that must be met, and formulate concrete steps to improve understanding and support for children with ADHD and their families. The results showed that there is stigma and incomprehension in society related to ADHD, influenced by lack of in-depth understanding, mental health literacy in the education curriculum and media stereotypes. ADHD plays an important role in society and education, but there are challenges in understanding and support. Intensive education efforts, outreach campaigns, mental health literacy integration, and inclusion strategies are expected to reduce stigma, increase understanding, and create a more supportive environment for children with ADHD.*

**Keywords:** *ADHD, Education, Society*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD) is a disorder characterized by three main problems, namely hyperactive behavior, impulsivity, and difficulty paying attention or concentrating (Mirnawati & Amka, 2019). These disorders can cause a decrease in learning achievement, such as reading, spelling, counting and writing, as well as affect memory skills, time orientation, and impaired language skills (Angraini Diva, 2023). In addition, children will also experience obstacles in controlling emotions, easily angered and easily frustrated.

The presence of a child with ADHD certainly brings its own challenges, especially for parents and families in providing assistance. The support and role of the family is very important for the child's future success (Silitonga, 2023). A supportive environment and the right mentoring can help these children become braver and ready to face the challenges around them (Syaputri & Afriza, 2022). In addition, people who better understand ADHD are expected to be more accepting and supportive of children with this condition, by showing a friendly and patient attitude (Khorini'mah & Kamala, 2020).

According to research by Efendi et al., (2022), children with ADHD need special services to help self-esteem, reduce hyperactivity, and increase attention, especially for school-age children to adolescents to prevent negative impacts in the future (Tuzahara et al., 2024). It is based on the principle that school services should be accessible to all students, regardless of differences in special

social, emotional, cultural and language needs (Rahmatika et al., 2016). The early detection model is part of a special observation effort against ADHD. This detection is carried out through instruments that identify signs of problems both to identify signs of problems that include pictures and symptoms of physical and psychological disorders, it is important to consult experts as well as make diagnoses and collect information related to child empowerment. Furthermore, a case conference was held between professionals, teachers, and parents to get the right treatment (Satwika et al., 2022).

The prevalence of ADHD among children is steadily increasing. Based on *the National Survey of Children's Health* (NSCH) ADHD cases in 2016, about 8.4% or 5.4 million children in the United States aged 2 to 17 years were diagnosed with ADHD (Danielson, in Jacob & Watini, 2022). In Indonesia, the prevalence of ADHD cannot be ascertained, but based on *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5* (DSM-5) data cited by the Central Statistics Agency (BPSN), around 3-7% of children suffer from ADHD. In 2007, about 16 million of 82 million children and adolescents under the age of 18 experienced psychiatric problems including ADHD disorder, with a ratio of 1:5 (Awiria & Dariyanto, in Natarezwa et al., 2023).

This data shows that ADHD is a significant problem in various countries. This increase can be seen in the increasing frequency of seminars or writings about ADHD in the mass media, as well as more schools accepting and providing special treatment for children with ADHD (Paternotte and Buitelaar (in Natarezwa et al., 2023)).

Based on the above description, this study aims to provide in-depth insight into the phenomenon of ADHD, identify needs that must be met, and formulate concrete steps to improve understanding and support for children with ADHD and their families.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted using the library research method. The approach used is qualitative research is descriptive and tends to be analytical. The purpose of this study is to make a positive contribution in improving public and educator understanding of ADHD, creating a more conducive environment, and supporting the optimal development of children with the disorder. The data collection technique was carried out by collecting 30 journal articles and 1 book that was relevant to the topic of discussion. The data that has been collected is then analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

ADHD (*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*) is a long-known disorder and is an important topic in children's psychology. ADHD often coexists with other emotional disorders, such

as depression and anxiety. Data from Riskesdas 2018 shows that the prevalence of emotional disorders, which are characterized by symptoms of depression and anxiety in individuals aged 15 years and above, reaches about 6.1% of the total population in Indonesia (Maulana et al., 2019). This underscores the importance of paying attention to overall mental health, including a better understanding of conditions such as ADHD and other emotional disorders.

The diagnosis of Hyperkinetic impulse disorder was first introduced by Laufer in 1957 for children with symptoms of intentionality and hyperactivity. About two decades later, Hyperkinetic Reactions were included in *the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) II* which was circulated in a psychodynamic view that it saw as a reaction to stressors. Over time, understanding has developed that the causes of these symptoms are more complex than just stress reactions, so DSM III uses phenomenological terms with no causal implications: *Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)* and *ADD with Hyperactivity*. The term ADHD was introduced in the DSM-III-R and remained in use until the DSM-IV and DSM-V (N.H & Setiawati, 2017).

Symptoms of ADHD in children can appear early, such as children having difficulty maintaining eye contact for more than 2 seconds when they are 3 months old and older and delays in speaking with unstructured sentences when they are 2.5 to 3 years old and older (Utami et al., 2021). Family knowledge, especially parents, is essential in the development of children with ADHD, as they play a role in detecting, handling, and caring for children (Adiputra, in Natarezwa et al., 2023). However, the lack of understanding of ADHD in society often creates negative stereotypes. Many consider ADHD to be a sign of a lack of discipline, not as a complex condition and requiring appropriate social and emotional support (Amalia, 2021).

The stigma against ADHD in society and education can be influenced by several factors. *First*, a lack of a deep understanding of this disorder can lead to stereotyping and prejudice. People who are not familiar with the characteristics of ADHD tend to see it as a sign of a lack of self-control or discipline, rather than as a complex neurobiological condition. *Second*, the lack of mental health literacy in the educational curriculum can lead to a lack of knowledge among teachers, students, and parents on how to identify and support individuals with ADHD. To overcome this stigma, more intensive educational efforts are needed, such as counseling campaigns in schools and communities (Widhiati et al., 2022). These campaigns can provide accurate information about the symptoms, impacts, and how to manage ADHD. Involving mental health experts in seminars or workshops also provides deeper insights to parents, educators, and the community (Natarezwa et al., 2023). Selain itu, menyediakan sumber daya online yang mudah diakses informasi yang jelas dan mendalam tentang ADHD bisa membantu individu mencari informasi secara mandiri (Daniel, 2024).

Inclusive education, which can be applied in primary schools and inclusive schools, is education that focuses on providing services to all learners regardless of their characteristics, recognizing that every learner has unique, diverse, and unequal needs. Based on government regulations, public schools are required to accept students with special needs, making them inclusive schools (Mahya et al., 2022). Education and parenting for children with ADHD are indeed different from other children. Proper management can include techniques to help children focus and concentrate, such as brain gym, *mind mapping* and *problem solving* (Denisrum, 2016).

According to Nurinawati et al. (2021), the diagnosis of ADHD in some children is only known when they are 12 years old, due to factors that can compensate for symptoms, such as above-average intelligence, and a comfortable and stable home atmosphere. However, there is no test that can accurately diagnose it, because the symptoms of ADHD in children vary based on their age, condition, and environment (Adiputra et al., 2018). Interventions for children with ADHD should be comprehensive, including diet, diet, medication, and *play therapy* (Hatiningsih, 2013).

Inclusive education strategies involve a variety of approaches to ensure that all students, including those with special needs such as ADHD, can engage and thrive in an educational environment. Some inclusive strategies include; a) Differential Personal Learning, allowing children with special needs to be able to learn at their own pace, avoiding time pressures that can hinder their understanding (Anatasia, 2023)., b) Collaboration, between teachers and other school staff, such as counselors, therapists, and other professional experts, is essential to ensure a holistic approach in supporting students with special needs (Putri et al., 2024)., c) Curriculum, there are four models that can be used to develop an adaptive curriculum for students with special needs in inclusion schools, namely; 1) Duplication model (using the same curriculum as students in general), 2) Substitution model (substitution made because students with special needs may not be able to do it, but the assignment can be replaced with a similar level of difficulty), and 3) Assignment model (some elements are not conveyed or given to students with special needs because they are considered too difficult with their abilities) (Mansur et al., 2022)., d) Evaluation Modification, includes health screening by medical personnel, early learning diagnostic assessments to assess students' knowledge, skills, and emotional and social aspects, as well as final assessments to evaluate their development in various areas after learning (Panginan & Awaliyah, 2023)., e) Training Methods, a method recommended by the *American Society for Training and Development* Include; 1) conscientious, to show the topic or conclude the session, 2) group discussions in small groups for in-depth discussions, 3) simulations and *role plays* for practice in certain situations, 4) games as interactive learning and *ice breakers*, and 5) case studies to apply knowledge to real situations (Mulyadi, 2022).

Collaboration between parents, teachers, and experts is very important in supporting children with ADHD, so that by adjusting doses and regular treatment schedules, they perform optimally in their academic and social environment while still paying attention to all kinds of dangers that may arise at any time (Nurinawati et al., 2021). If your child needs to receive medication during school hours, it is very important to make a plan so that the medication is taken on schedule. In addition, schools must ensure that the rights of children and parents related to medical confidentiality are protected (Wahidah, 2018). With a better understanding of ADHD and a comprehensive approach to its treatment, we can help children with ADHD to overcome their challenges and reach their full potential (Kosim, 2022). Collaborative efforts to provide better support, information, and understanding about ADHD can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all children.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that ADHD (*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*) is a neurobiological disorder that affects children and can continue into adulthood. Although it has been known for a long time, ADHD is still often misunderstood as a problem of discipline or self-control rather than a condition that requires special attention and intervention. Lack of understanding leads to negative stereotypes and stigma towards individuals who experience it. Dealing with ADHD requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach, involving collaboration between families, educators, health workers, and educational strategies tailored to the specific needs of individuals.

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