**Fact Sheet for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

**What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?**

It is one of the most common childhood disorders. Symptoms include difficulty paying attention, controlling behaviour and hyperactivity. ADHD symptoms usually appear early in life, often between the ages of 3 and 6. Overall prevalence of ADHD has been noted to be in the range of 6-12% in the western literature. In Indian population studies, the prevalence was found to be 1.6%. Symptoms of ADHD must begin before the age of seven and it can continue into adulthood.

**A child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder often shows some of these symptoms:**

* trouble paying attention
* inattention to details and makes careless mistakes
* easily distracted
* loses school supplies, forgets to turn in homework
* trouble finishing class work and homework
* trouble listening
* trouble following multiple adult commands
* blurts out answers
* impatience
* fidgets or squirms
* leaves seat and runs about or climbs excessively
* seems "on the go"
* talks too much and has difficulty playing quietly
* interrupts or intrudes on others

**What causes ADHD?**

ADHD probably occurs as a result of a number of risk factors including genes, environmental factors such as cigarette smoking and alcohol abuse in pregnancy, perinatal stress, low birth weight, brain injuries and hyperthyroidism, etc

**How is ADHD assessed?**

*Important questions that parents and specialists have to answer before labelling it as a disorder:*

* *Are the behaviours developmentally appropriate?*
* *Are the behaviours excessive, and affect all aspects of the child’s life?*
* *Do the behaviours occur more often in the child than its peers?*
* *Do the behaviours occur in several settings or a single setting?*
* *Are the behaviours in response to particular situation or present all the time?*

No single test can diagnose ADHD. Information is gathered from multiple sources including parents, other caregivers, and school teachers. Child interview and behavioural observation is an essential part of assessment. It is important to rule out other conditions that may mimic ADHD or maybe comorbid with ADHD. For eg. Undetected hearing or vision problems, untreated seizures, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, anxiety, depression. It is also necessary to evaluate the home and school environment for any recent changes and stressors. A Psychiatrist or another Mental Health Professional with training in child and adolescent disorders or a Paediatrician with training behavioural disorders should assess the child and family to make a definitive diagnosis of ADHD.

**How is ADHD treated?**

Treatment includes medication, behavioural therapy, parent management training, environmental manipulation, liaison with school, inputs for education, and helping the child /adolescent become more organised so that they can compensate for the deficits due to the disorder.

**Bibliography**

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

AACAP: Facts for Families: ADHD