

Girls with ADHD: Disproportionately Disadvantaged

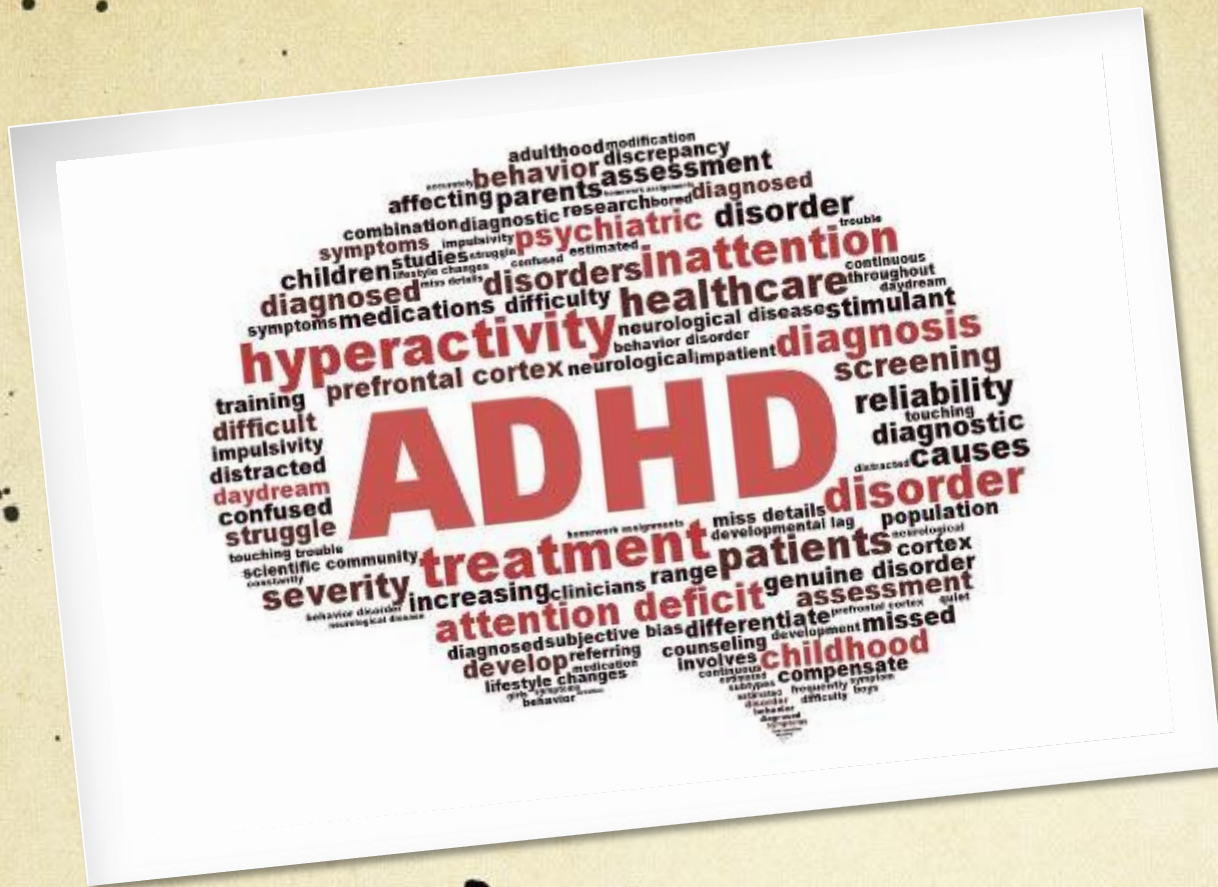
Presented by: Leah K. Glynn, MA, MSN, RN, NCSN

Conflict of Interest

- I have no conflict of interest pertaining to this presentation, materials, and/or content

Objectives

- Identify signs and symptoms of ADHD
- Discuss the different presentations of ADHD
- Identify the variations between sexes
- Discuss the long-term implications of a misdiagnosed female with ADHD
- Empower attendees with knowledge to advocate



Imagine ADHD...

Traditional View of ADHD

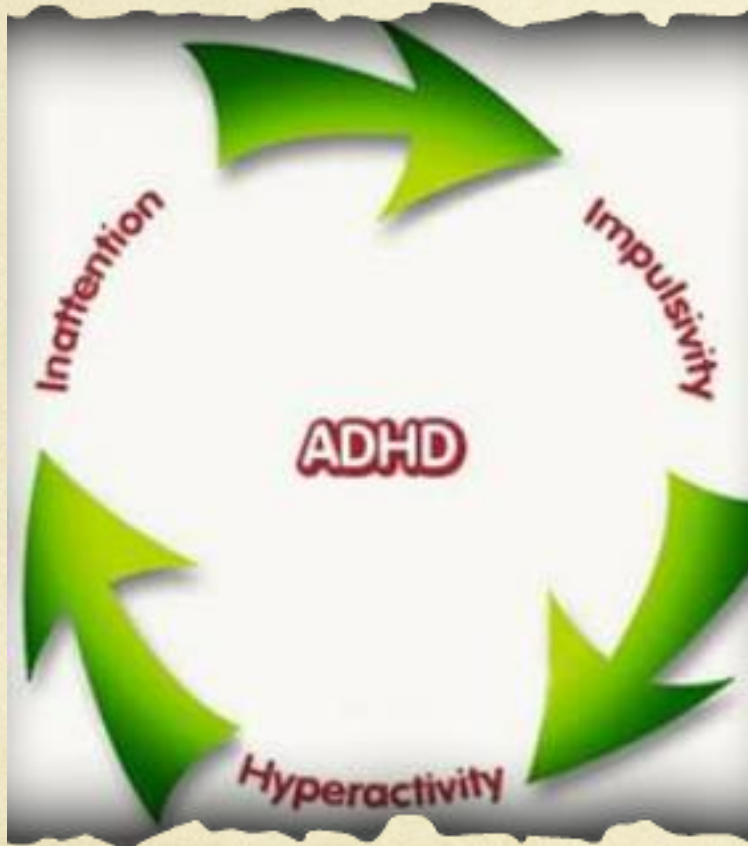
- Considered a mental health issue affecting boys
- Hyperactivity
 - Hallmark sign
- Higher rates in boys
- Often identified in school



Diagnosis of ADHD

- Classification:
 - Inattentive
 - Hyperactive
 - Combined Type
- Severity - depends on # of symptoms
 - Mild
 - Moderate
 - Severe
- To qualify:
 - 6 symptoms for 6mo
 - Removed criteria symptoms must be present before 12yo
 - Impairment in daily activity
 - Found in more than one environment

Signs & Symptoms of ADHD



- Easily distracted/off task
- Difficulty remembering
- Constantly fidgets/squirms
- Talks excessively
- Acts without thinking
- Guesses instead of taking time
- Interrupts/intrudes

ADHD Symptoms by Type

Symptoms of ADHD

Inattention

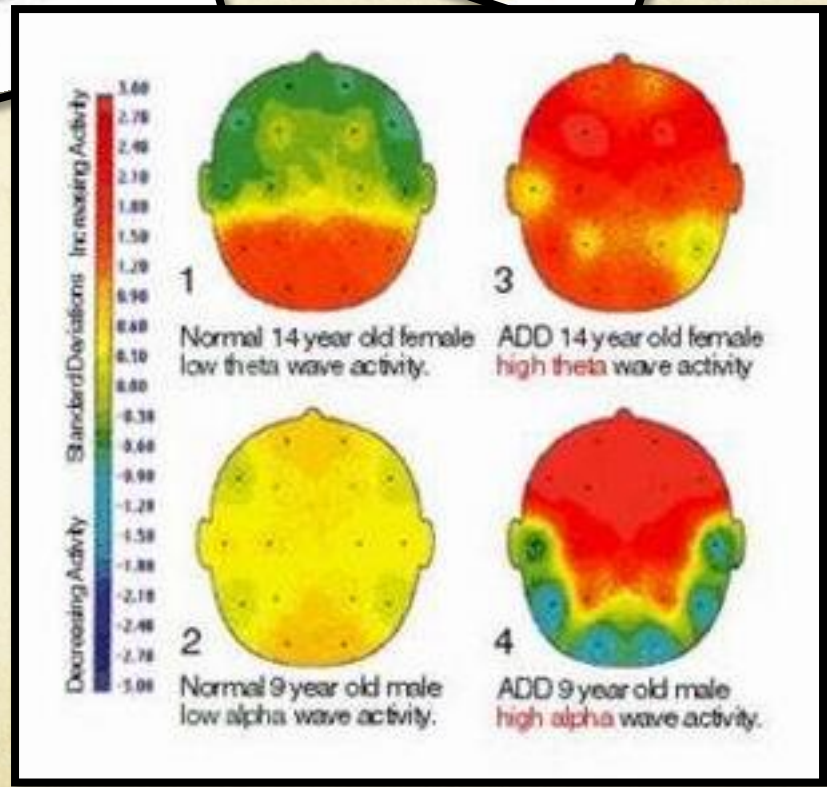
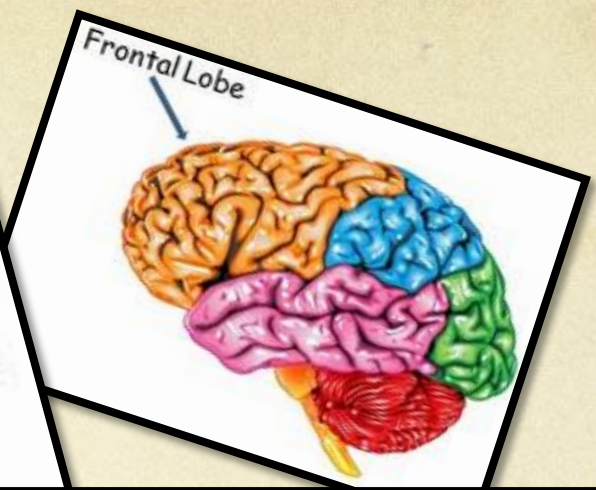
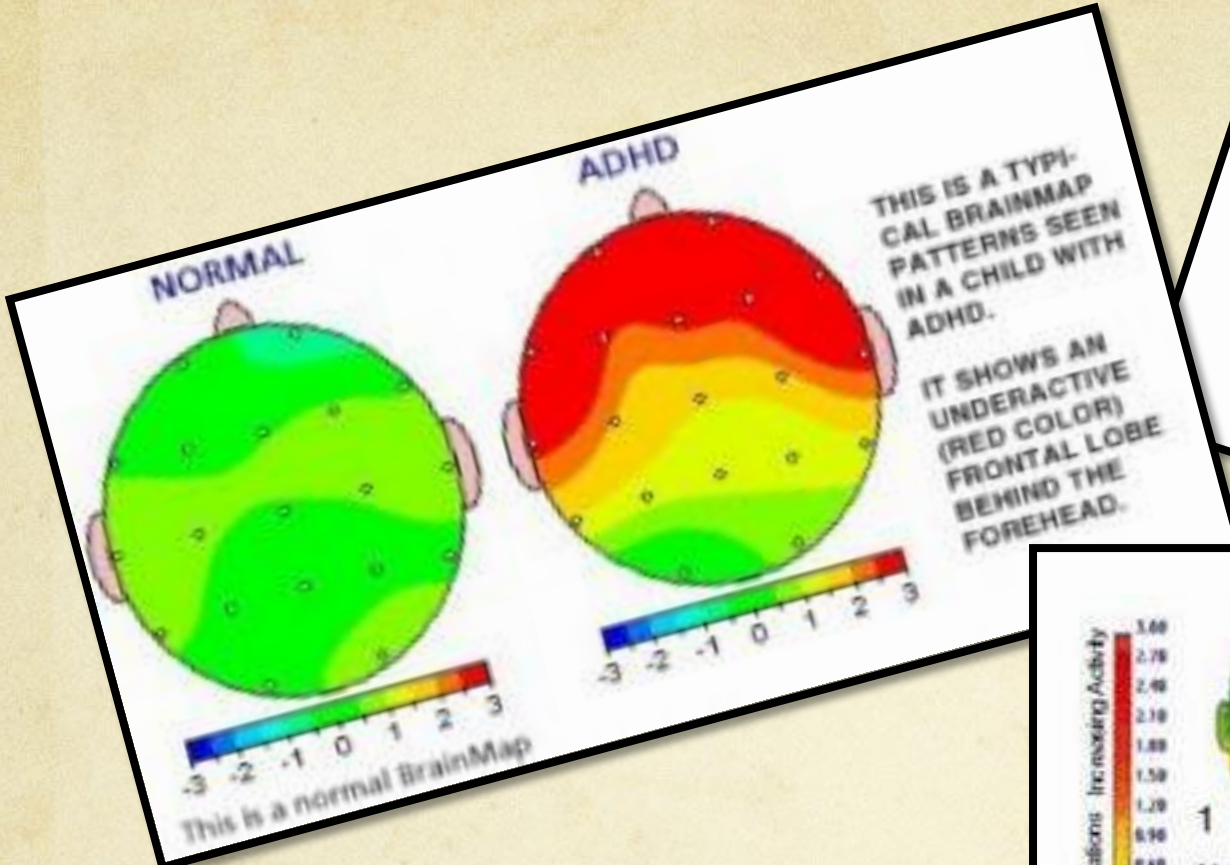
Disorganization
Lack of focus
Difficulty giving attention to details
Have trouble staying on topic while talking

Hyperactivity

Fidget and squirm when seated.
Get up frequently to walk or run around.
Have trouble playing quietly or doing quiet hobbies

Impulsivity

Impatience
Having a hard time waiting to talk or react
Blurt out answers before someone finishes asking them a question.



ADHD Impacts the Brain

- Notice the differences in the frontal lobe
 - Carries out higher mental processes such as thinking, decision making, and planning

Symptoms: Girls vs. Boys

Boys

- Hyperactive/Fidget
- Aggressive physically
- Defiant
- Disorganized
- Peer rejection
- Conduct problems

Girls

- Inattentive/ daydreaming
- Emotional
- Lack verbal filter
- Disorganized
- Self isolation/ anti-social
- Addictive behavior

Symptoms Compared



Hypo*Active

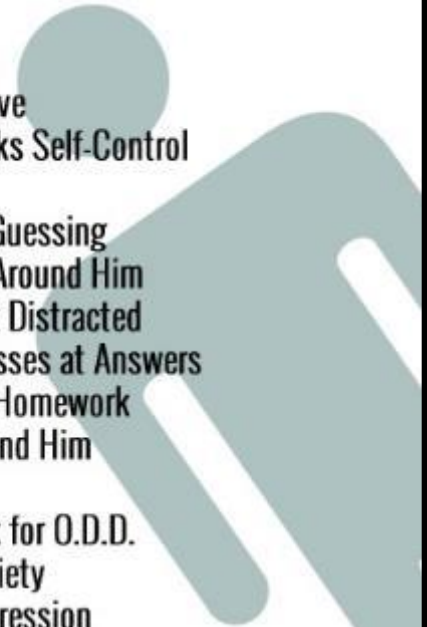
Slow Moving, Lethargic
Passive, Often Late
Sluggish Thinking, Poor Accuracy
Brain Fog, Easily Confused
Poor Concept of Time
Pays Attention to the Wrong Thing
Not Sure What to Pay Attention To
Not Usually Disruptive
Most Often are Girls

Low Risk for Oppositional Defiant Disorder
Medium to High Risk for Anxiety
Medium to High Risk for Depression
Medium to High Risk for Learning Disabilities
Response to Stimulants:
20% good | 60% moderate | 20% poor
May Respond Better to Non-Stimulants
Good Responders to Therapy

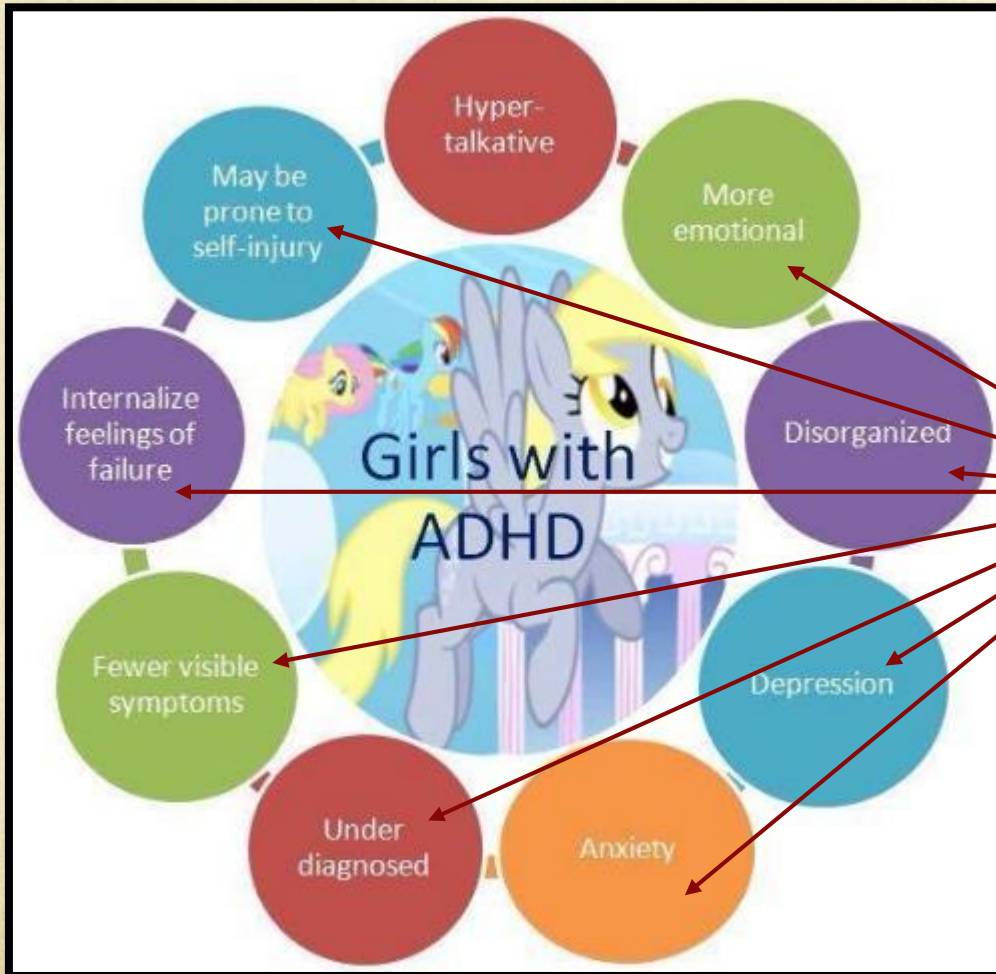
Hyper*Active

Fast Moving, Impulsive
Lacks Inhibition, Lacks Self-Control
Over-Active
Impulsive Thinking, Guessing
Aware of Everything Around Him
Normal Thinking, But Distracted
Works Too Fast, Guesses at Answers
Disorganized, Loses Homework
Disrupts Others Around Him

Medium to High Risk for O.D.D.
Medium Risk for Anxiety
Medium Risk for Depression
Family History with High Rates of Alch. Problems
Response to Stimulants:
90% good | 10% moderate or poor
Poor Responders to Social Skills Training, or
Internal Insight Therapies.



Symptoms in Girls



Long-term
Complications

ADHD Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmeE3qTJRUw>

Girls are often Misdiagnosed

- Learning Disabilities
 - Reading, writing, motor, or language
- Psychological Disorder
 - Anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder
- Behavioral Disorders
 - Conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder
- Medical Conditions
 - Thyroid, neurological, epilepsy, sleep disorder
- Or Dismissed
 - Recent move, death, deployment, bullying

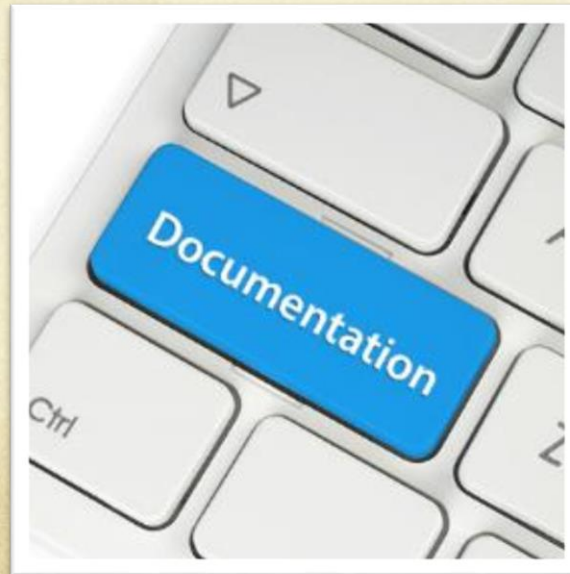
Long-term Complications in Females

- Lasting academic & Social deficits
- Academics:
 - Incomplete work
 - Memory impairment
 - Lower reading level
- Frequent Deficits:
 - Eating disorders
 - Self-harm/suicide
 - Drug abuse (addiction)
 - Relational issues



What does this mean for a teacher?

- Pay attention when a student is struggling
- Advocate for students
- DOCUMENT everything!



What can a school nurse do?

- Educate Staff!
 - Students are being overlooked because they do not have the 'classic' signs of ADHD.
 - Listen to the struggles of the student & the teacher
 - Observe the student
- Get the school psych/counselor involved
- Educate parents
 - Parents are often scared and unaware of what ADHD looks like, sounds like, and means long-time
 - This does not mean medication
 - It does mean better access to school resources

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