

People with ADHD do 1 month's less work per year

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Workers with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) do 22 days less work per year than people who do not have the disorder, finds research published online ahead of print in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

So much work is being lost that the researchers recommend employers consider screening staff for ADHD and providing treatment for those affected, because it would be more cost-effective for their businesses.

People who have ADHD find it difficult to concentrate because they may be hyperactive, easily distracted, forgetful or impulsive. Children with the disorder are being increasingly diagnosed because they are likely to be tested for ADHD if they have problems with their schoolwork. However, many adults with ADHD do not know they have the condition.

More than 7,000 employed and self-employed workers aged 18-44 years were screened for ADHD as part of the World Health Organisation World Mental Health Survey Initiative. They were also asked about their performance at work in the last month.

On average 3.5 per cent of workers had ADHD. It was more prevalent in men and workers in developed rather than developing countries.

People with ADHD were found to spend 22.1 more days not doing work than other workers per year. This was made up of 8.4 days when they

were unable to work or carry out their normal activities, plus 21.7 days of reduced work quantity and 13.6 days of reduced work quality.

The researchers, who are part of a WHO research consortium at Harvard Medical School, suggest adult ADHD might be a candidate for targeted workplace screening and treatment programmes because cost-effective therapies exist which could improve some aspects of affected workers' performance. "It might be cost-effective from the employer perspective to implement workplace screening programmes and provide treatment for workers with ADHD," they say.

Source: British Medical Journal

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