

One in five US teenage boys diagnosed ADHD, report says

April 1 2013

Nearly one in five American teenage boys is diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, marking a dramatic rise in the past decade, the New York Times reported on Monday.

The condition, for which potent [stimulant drugs](#) like Adderal or Ritalin are often prescribed, has been previously estimated to affect three to seven percent of children.

The newspaper compiled the data from raw figures provided by the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), which took a [phone survey](#) of 76,000 parents from 2011 to 2012.

The report said that 15 percent of school-age [boys](#) in the United States have received an ADHD diagnosis, compared to seven percent among girls.

Among those age 14 to 17, the rate was higher: 19 percent for boys and 10 percent for girls.

An estimated 6.4 million children ages 4 through 17 have received an ADHD diagnosis at some point in their lives, a 16 percent increase since 2007 and a 53 percent rise in the past decade, the newspaper said.

Experts said the figures were surprising and raised concern about the potential for abuse of the medications used to treat ADHD, as well as risks of misuse including psychosis, anxiety and addiction.

"We need to ensure balance," CDC director Thomas Frieden was quoted as saying.

"The right medications for ADHD, given to the right people, can make a huge difference. Unfortunately, misuse appears to be growing at an alarming rate."

James Swanson, a professor of psychiatry at Florida International University and a leading ADHD researcher, expressed concern about the findings.

"There's no way that one in five high-school boys has ADHD," he was quoted as saying.

"If we start treating children who do not have the disorder with stimulants, a certain percentage are going to have problems that are predictable—some of them are going to end up with abuse and dependence."

The newspaper also noted that sales of stimulants that treat ADHD have more than doubled in recent years. In 2007, sales amounted to four billion dollars; in 2012 they were to nine billion dollars.

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