

Five-fold increase in ADHD medication use in children and adolescents

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Use of stimulant medications to treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents has increased significantly over the past several years. This trend toward increased use of prescription stimulants extends beyond ADHD to other types of

neuropsychiatric disorders in children and teens as well, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), according to a study published in *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology (JCAP)*.

Søren Dalsgaard, MD, PhD, Helena Skyt Nielsen, PhD, and Marianne Simonsen, PhD, Aarhus University (Denmark), Lundbeck Foundation Initiative for Integrative Psychiatric Research (Denmark), and Hospital of Telemark (Norway), conducted a study of more than 850,000 [children](#) born in Denmark between 1990 and 2001. They found that 61% of children with ADHD, 16% of children with ASD, and 3% of those with other psychiatric disorders were treated with one or more medications typically prescribed for ADHD—methylphenidate, dexamphetamine, and atomoxetine. The data indicated significant increases in the prescription rates of these medications during the years 2003 to 2010.

"This study utilizes a population-based national cohort of children and adolescents, and assesses stimulant treatment in children and adolescents with ASD," says Harold S. Koplewicz, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *JCAP*, and President, Child Mind Institute, New York, NY. "This is the largest and first prospective study to quantify the change in the use of treatment with ADHD medications over time."

More information: [The article](#) is available on the [JCAP](#) website.

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