

Global review reveals ADHD rates in adults

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A review of studies involving more than 21 million people worldwide has revealed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder affects a staggering 3% of the global adult population. Disturbingly, nine out of 10 adults diagnosed with ADHD are not receiving the crucial treatment they require.

The landmark [review](#) led by Curtin University examined 57 unique international primary studies from meta-analytic reviews undertaken between 2009 and 2021 and found it is a global concern, impacting approximately 180 million adults.

Published in the journal [Psychiatry Research](#), the paper is titled "Prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults: Umbrella Review of Evidence Generated Across the Globe."

Lead author Dr. Getinet Yaya, from the Curtin School of Population Health, said the umbrella review is believed to be the first to quantify how widespread the disorder is.

"It has not only shed light on the significant prevalence of ADHD among adults but also shows the dire need for greater awareness, diagnosis, and management of this condition in adulthood," Dr. Yaya said.

"ADHD is typically associated with children but can affect any age group, and it is imperative we pay more attention to its prevention, identification, and management.

"Several factors contribute to the startling fact that a vast majority of adults are not receiving the appropriate treatment, including limited attention, limited access to specialized care, diagnostic challenges, and variations in treatment options."

The findings also revealed ADHD-I, characterized by inattention, was the most prevalent subtype among adults, followed by ADHD-HI (hyperactivity) and ADHD-C (combined).

Co-author and head of the Curtin School of Population Health, Professor Rosa Alati, said the prevalence of ADHD is only marginally lower than that of other [mental disorders](#) receiving significant government [attention](#),

such as schizophrenia (4%).

"This research aims to be a vital resource for policymakers, researchers and clinicians by providing robust and [reliable data](#) to help with the development of prevention and early intervention strategies," Professor Alati said.

"Focusing on ADHD in adults is a critical public health concern, as leaving it untreated can lead to long term social, physical and mental health challenges."

More information: Getinet Ayano et al, Prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in adults: Umbrella review of evidence generated across the globe, *Psychiatry Research* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.psychres.2023.115449](#)

Provided by Curtin University

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