

ADHD in adults

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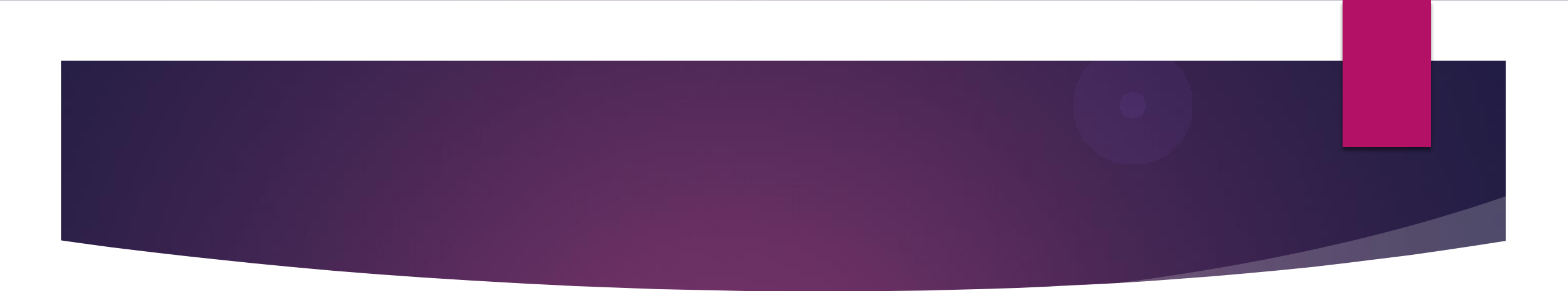


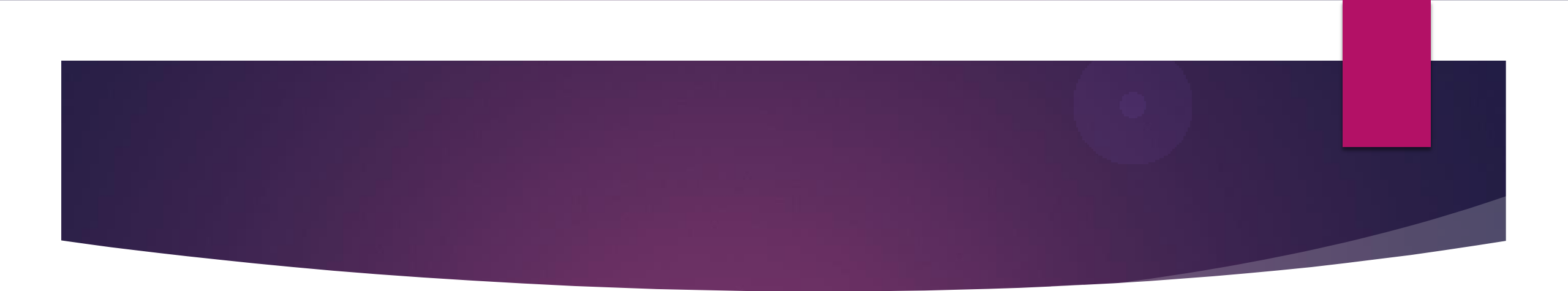
▶ Adult ADHD is a mental health disorder :

- Difficulty paying attention
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsive behavior

▶ Adult ADHD can lead to:

- Unstable relationships
- Poor work or school performance
- Low self-esteem
- Other problems.

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- ▶ Though it's called adult ADHD, symptoms start in early childhood and continue into adulthood.
 - ▶ In some cases, ADHD is not recognized or diagnosed until the person is an adult.
 - ▶ Adult ADHD symptoms may not be as clear as ADHD symptoms in children:
 - Hyperactivity may decrease,
 - Struggles with impulsiveness ,restlessness ,difficulty paying attention may continue.

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- ▶ Treatment for adult ADHD is similar to treatment for childhood ADHD. Adult ADHD treatment includes:
 - ▶ Medications
 - ▶ Psychological counseling (psychotherapy)
 - ▶ Treatment for any mental health conditions that occur along with ADHD.

How prevalent is adult ADHD?

- ▶ Although it is estimated that 2%-6% of adults have ADHD, this illness begins during childhood.
- ▶ While the condition is assessed more often in boys than in girls, it appears to occur in men and women at equal rates.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of children with ADHD retain some symptoms of the illness as adults.
- ▶ Other key statistics include:
 - More than 90% of adults with the condition describe having trouble focusing
 - More than 50% have both distractibility and hyperactivity/impulsivity
 - While more than one-third have just distractibility

Symptoms

- ▶ Some people with ADHD have **fewer symptoms** as they age, but some adults continue to have major symptoms that **interfere** with daily functioning.
- ▶ Many adults with ADHD aren't aware they have it — they just know that everyday tasks can be a challenge.

Adult ADHD symptoms may include:

- ▶ Impulsiveness
- ▶ Disorganization and problems prioritizing
- ▶ Poor time management skills
- ▶ Problems focusing on a task
- ▶ Trouble multitasking
- ▶ Excessive activity or restlessness
- ▶ Poor planning
- ▶ Low frustration tolerance
- ▶ Frequent mood swings
- ▶ Problems following through and completing tasks
- ▶ Hot temper
- ▶ Trouble coping with stress

Adult ADHD symptoms may include:

- ▶ Identifying ADHD more easily in men.
- ▶ This may be because women tend to have different symptoms of ADHD and do not always display the behaviors typically associated with it. “**internalizing**” symptoms, such as inattentiveness, are more prominent in women than “externalizing” ones, such as hyperactivity and impulsivity → “a low index of clinical suspicion exists”
- ▶ Women with ADHD may be more likely to develop **better coping mechanisms** than men to hide their symptoms. This may lead to misdiagnosis or a lack of treatment.

Risks of untreated ADHD in adults

- ▶ **Low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety**
- ▶ **Difficulty in relationships**
 - Spouses of people with ADHD may feel **more neglected and lower intimacy and marital satisfaction**. than those living with individuals without ADHD symptoms.
 - The husbands of women with ADHD may be less tolerant of their partners' behaviors than the wives of men with ADHD.

Risks of untreated ADHD in adults

▶ **Job instability**

- May be less likely to graduate from college or high school and may, therefore, find it more difficult to have a stable income
- Unable to stay focused at work, which could lead to difficulty holding down a job for an extended period of time.
- May be less likely to have independence due to the financial limitations they may face.

Risks of untreated ADHD in adults

- ▶ **Negative parent-child interactions**
 - may have more difficulty controlling their emotions and impulses, which may lead to frustration and conflict with children
- ▶ **Drug and Substance misuse (alcohol, nicotine ,....)**
- ▶ **Increased mortality rate and poor physical and mental health**
- ▶ **Trouble with the law**
- ▶ **Frequent car accidents or other accidents**
- ▶ **Suicidal attempts**

Potential benefits of ADHD

▶ Cognitive dynamism

- People with ADHD may, at times, benefit from non-sequential and spontaneous thought processes, as well as periods of intense mental “**hyper**” focus.

▶ Courage and adventurousness

- Being brave is another trait that can come with ADHD. “thrill-seeking” activities, such as extreme sports.
- The study suggests that this bravery and thirst for adventure comes from the spontaneity that people with ADHD tend to experience.

▶ Energy

▶ Humanity

- This encompasses social intelligence, humor, and recognition of feeling

Myth: People with ADHD just need to try harder

- ▶ **Fact:** ADHD **isn't a problem of motivation or laziness**. Kids and adults who have it are often trying as hard as they can to pay attention.
- ▶ Telling people with ADHD to “just focus” is like asking someone who's nearsighted to just see farther.

Myth: People with ADHD can't ever focus.

- ▶ **Fact:** It's true that people with ADHD usually have trouble focusing. But if they're very interested in something, they may focus on it intensely. It's called **hyperfocus**.
- ▶ Some kids with ADHD are easily distracted in class but can't pull themselves away from a game they're playing. Adults might have trouble focusing on the parts of work they find boring, but they pour themselves into aspects they really like.

Myth: ADHD is the result of bad parenting.

- ▶ **Fact:** ADHD is caused by brain differences, not bad parenting. But some people see kids fidgeting, being impulsive, or not listening and assume it's due to a lack of discipline.
- ▶ They don't realize that what they're seeing are signs of a medical condition, and not the result of something parents or caregivers did or didn't do.

What's typical behavior and what's ADHD?

- ▶ ADHD is diagnosed only when symptoms are severe enough to cause ongoing problems **in more than one area of your life**. These persistent and disruptive symptoms can be traced back to early childhood.
- ▶ Diagnosis of ADHD in adults can be difficult because certain ADHD symptoms are similar to those caused by other conditions, such as **anxiety** or **mood disorders**. And many adults with ADHD also have at least one other mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety.

Coexisting conditions

- ▶ Other disorders often occur along with ADHD and make treatment more challenging. These include:
 - **Mood disorders.** depression, bipolar disorder or another mood disorder. While mood problems aren't necessarily due directly to ADHD, a repeated pattern of failures and frustrations due to ADHD can worsen depression.
 - **Anxiety disorders.** Anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders may cause overwhelming worry, nervousness and other symptoms. Anxiety can be made worse by the challenges and setbacks caused by ADHD.
 - **Other psychiatric disorders.** personality disorders, intermittent explosive disorder and substance use disorders.
 - **Learning disabilities.** Adults with ADHD may score lower on academic testing than would be expected for their age, intelligence and education. Learning disabilities can include problems with understanding and communicating.

Causes and risk factors:


- ▶ While there is no one specific cause for ADHD, there are a number of **biologically** and **socially** based risk factors.
- ▶ Brain-imaging studies:
 - Traits of the brains of people who have ADHD include a tendency to be smaller
 - Less connection between certain areas of the brain
 - Less regulation of the neurochemical **dopamine** compared to people who do not have the disorder.

Causes and risk factors:

- ▶ Factors prior to birth that can increase the likelihood of developing ADHD include:
 - Maternal stress, smoking during pregnancy, prematurity and low birth weight, as well as an early life stressor in the individual with ADHD.
 - Males and having a family history of this disorder increase the chances that a person will be diagnosed with ADHD.
 - Low family income and low educational achievement for a person's father are social risk factors for developing ADHD.
 - Lack of nutrients such as mg-folate-zn-polyunsaturated acids.

Diagnosis:

- ▶ According to the (*DSM-V*):
 - A child should exhibit six symptoms of inattention or six symptoms of combined hyperactivity and impulsivity, and an older teen or adult need only demonstrate five of each group of symptoms.
 - Diagnostic criteria further state that symptoms should begin prior to 12 years of age,
 - Occur in more than one setting (like home and work)
 - Be significant enough to cause difficulties for the person
 - Not be able to be better explained by another illness
 - There are three types of ADHD: predominately inattentive presentation, predominately hyperactive/impulsive presentation, and the combined (inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive) presentation.



Utah Criteria for Adult Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- I. Retrospective childhood ADHD diagnosis
 - A. Narrow criterion: met DSM-IV criteria in childhood by parent interview^a
 - B. Broad criterion: both (1) and (2) are met as reported by patient^b
 1. Childhood hyperactivity
 2. Childhood attention deficits
- II. Adult characteristics: five additional symptoms, including ongoing difficulties with inattentiveness and hyperactivity and at least three other symptoms:
 - A. Inattentiveness
 - B. Hyperactivity
 - C. Mood lability
 - D. Irritability and hot temper
 - E. Impaired stress tolerance
 - F. Disorganization
 - G. Impulsivity
- III. Exclusions: not diagnosed in presence of severe depression, psychosis, or severe personality disorder

Treatments:

- ▶ Treatments for ADHD include: medication and education about the illness
- ▶ Participation in an ADHD support group
- ▶ Instructional training for a number of issues including:
 - Career counseling
 - Organizational skills building,
 - Parent counseling, financial training
 - Development of time-management skills.
 - Many people with this condition may benefit from cognitive behavior therapy.
 - Life style

Treatments:

- ▶ Stimulant medication Methylphenidate or dextroamphetamine
- ▶ Given the longer days and increased responsibilities that adolescents and adults have compared to young children, **longer-acting stimulants are usually prescribed.** (Concerta Focalin –XR)
- ▶ Adults whose symptoms early in the morning or late in the evening are an issue, or whom have a history or propensity to a drug use disorder, **stimulants may not be** the optimal medication treatment and, therefore, they may respond better to a nonstimulant medication for treatment of ADHD.

Treatments:

- ▶ Using a stimulant to treat ADHD in people who have no history of drug abuse tends to **decrease the likelihood of their ever developing a substance abuse problem.**
- ▶ However, people with a recent history of drug or substance abuse may want to avoid the small but possible addiction potential of stimulant medication. Individuals who either had less-than-optimal effects or had significant side effects to taking stimulants may respond better to a nonstimulant medication like guanfacine, clonidine, or atomoxetine, or to taking the prescription supplement phosphatidylserine-omega-3.
- ▶ People with ADHD are more likely to develop mood problems as adults. They therefore may benefit from medications like bupropion or venlafaxine that treat both ADHD and depression or anxiety.

Behavioral treatments

- ▶ Doctors may help people with ADHD come up with new ways to improve and manage their behaviors. For example, these options may include:
 - Learning how to cope with stress
 - Learning how to manage their time effectively
 - Increasing their productivity
 - Being a role model to their children
 - Getting organized
 - Spending time with supportive people
 - Setting realistic goals
 - Limiting screen time

What is the prognosis of adult ADHD?

- ▶ The prognosis for ADHD adults seems to be influenced by:
 - the severity of symptoms
 - scores on intelligence tests
 - whether the person with the condition has other mental health problems as well as if there are family issues such as parental, mental health problems, family problems, socioeconomic challenges, and if the individual with ADHD receives treatment.
- ▶ Studies show that stimulant treatment of this condition often improves the prognosis for adults, decreasing the risk for developing other psychiatric problems, failing in school and in the world of work.



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