



MEDIA RELEASE

12 December 2005

Parent views on ADHD care, and the changes needed

A new Australian study which has surveyed the parents of children with ADHD, identifies a number of gaps in the current system and recommends changes to the way children with ADHD are managed. The study by Dr Patrick Concannon from Sydney and the editorial by Dr Daryl Efron in Melbourne are in the latest edition of the Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health (JPCH), the peer reviewed journal of the Paediatrics Division of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP).

"The study found only 55% of parents were satisfied with their child's care. Lack of educational support and teacher understanding of ADHD were identified as challenges for many parents. 16% of parents felt that academic/behavioural support at school was inadequate and 9.5% believed school staff lacked understanding about ADHD and its implications," Dr Concannon said.

The study looked at 278 children between 10-12 years of age living in northern Sydney in 2000. The parents completed an anonymous questionnaire that asked their views on diagnosis, treatment and overall management.

82% of the children had trialled medication and 66% of these were still taking it. Non-conventional treatments had been used by 71%, most commonly an elimination diet and/or fatty acid supplement.

In the editorial Dr Daryl Efron, a paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital's Centre for Community Child Health, recommends a number of changes to the current way children with ADHD are treated in the health and education system.

"We need to develop more efficient, integrated and responsive models of care for children with developmental-behavioural problems. Paediatricians and teachers need to work together and consider reciprocal training and joint professional development activities," Dr Efron said.

Many children with ADHD do not meet the current eligibility requirements for additional classroom support, often leaving children to fend for themselves in a system which sometimes seems designed to thwart their efforts.

"Because of the lack of specialist teacher support, many children with ADHD struggle in the classroom and consequences include high school drop-out rate, low adult literacy, secondary emotional problems and long-term unemployment," Dr Efron said.

Dr Efron concludes that paediatricians need to get smarter about working with other professional groups to help children with ADHD. Paediatricians are also encouraged to assert their central role in the medical management of children with ADHD.

The RACP is responsible for training, educating and representing over 9,000 physicians in Australia and New Zealand. The RACP represents 25 medical specialties including paediatrics, public health and occupational medicine. Physicians are often called specialists

The views expressed in the Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health do not in any way reflect the official views of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians.



MEDIA RELEASE

and are doctors who have completed an extra six years or more of training after their initial medical training and choose to specialise in a particular area of medicine.

Contact:

Dr Daryl Efron, Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Childrens Hospital:
0419 565 924

Dr Patrick Concannon, Child & Family Health Service, Royal North Shore and Ryde
Health Sector: 02 9448 3155

For a copy of the paper contact: Ms Megan Winter, RACP Media Officer,
(02) 9256 9602, 0408 639 697, megan.winter@racp.edu.au