



Ask the Expert Webinar Chat Series

Presented by the
National Resource Center on ADHD



Ask the Expert: The Representation of ADHD by the Media



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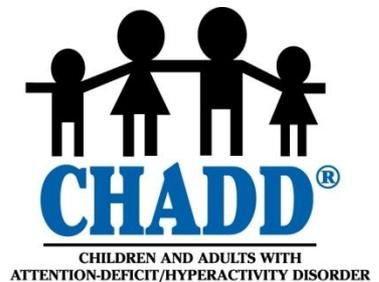
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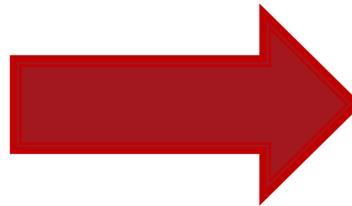
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To Ask A Question:



The screenshot shows the GoToWebinar interface with the following sections:

- Attendee List (2 | Max 201)**: Includes a tab for "Attendees (1)" and "Staff (1)". A dropdown menu is set to "NAMES - ALPHABETICALLY", showing "Corena Bahr (Me)". A search box is located at the bottom of this section.
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- Webinar Now**: Displays "Webinar ID: 731-938-951" and the "GoToWebinar™" logo.

A recording of today's webinar will be available in two business days at www.Help4ADHD.org



Please take our survey!

- ▶ Send us your feedback about today's webinar! An email will arrive shortly with a link to take the survey.
 - ▶ Thank you for helping us plan future webinars that meet the interests of the ADHD community!
- 



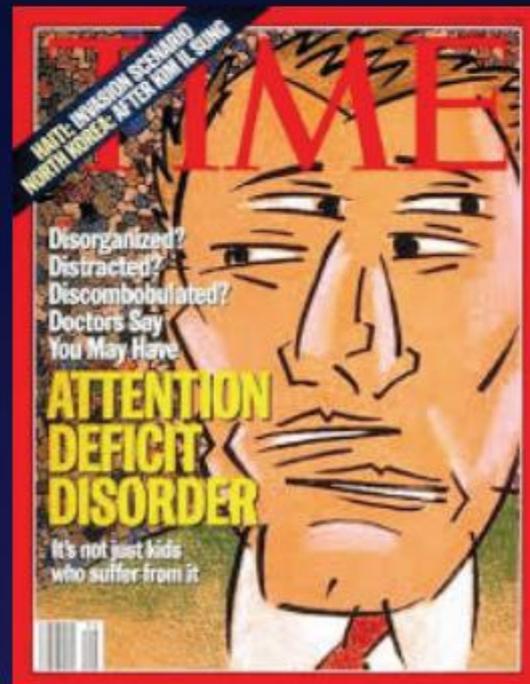
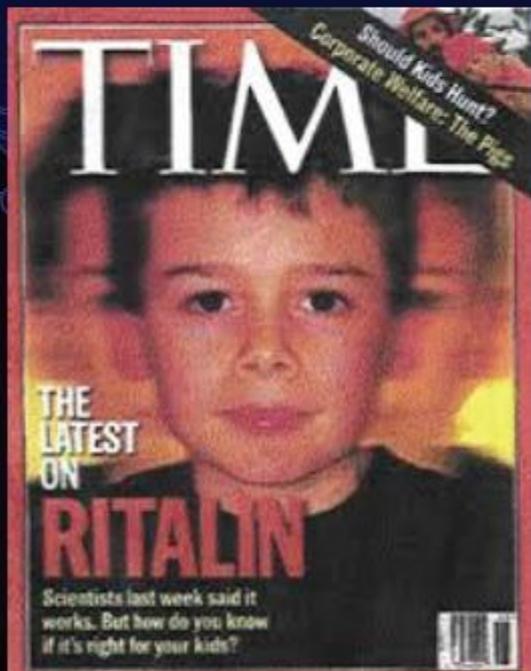
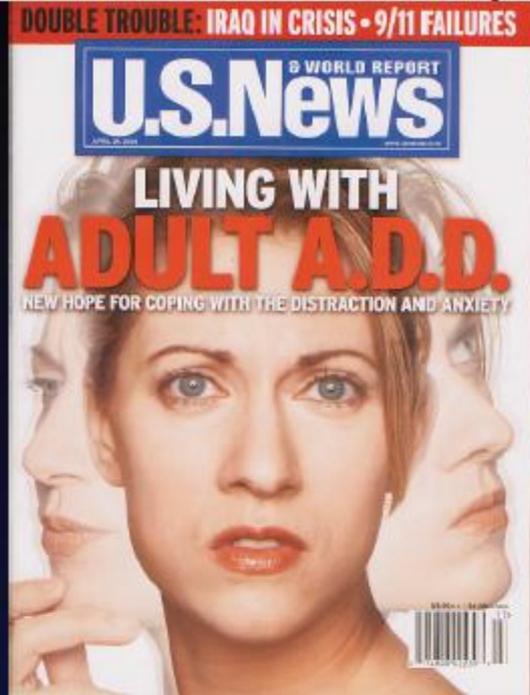
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Public Awareness of Adult ADHD



Three “Arguable Causes” for ADHD

▶ Social

- The environment causes the behavior so change the environment

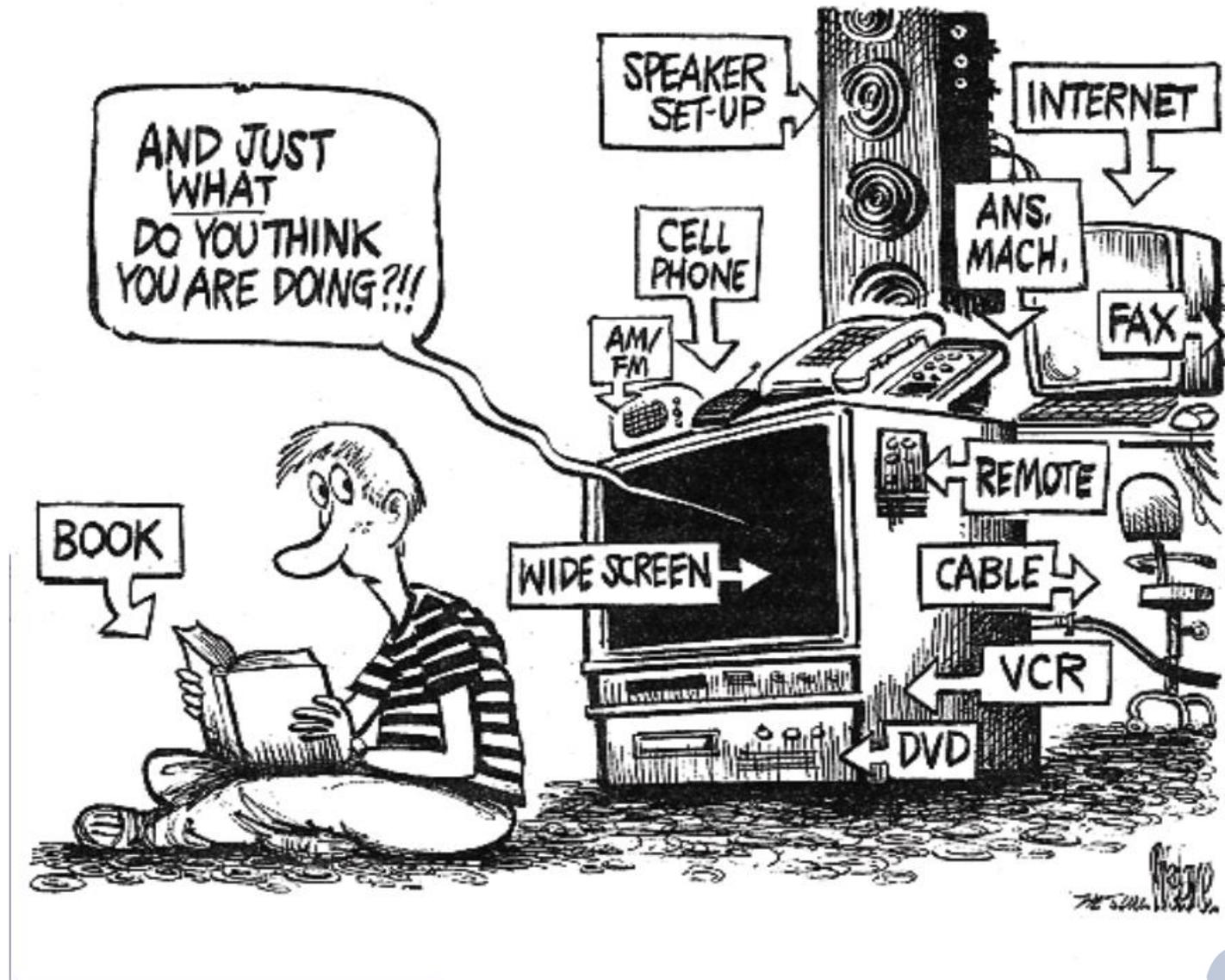
▶ Psychological

- The person causes the behavior so change the person

▶ Biological

- The “chemical imbalance” causes the behavior so give medication





Pepper . . . and Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



*"At some point we evolved from
hunters-gatherers to shoppers-returners."*





“Well, Dad, my guess would be that heredity played a part in those bad grades.”



Understand What You Don't See

- ▶ Print, online, TV/movies/books
 - Misrepresented research findings
 - Inadequate review of research
 - Story construction
 - Impact on parents
 - Quotes out of context



Accuracy of ADHD Findings by Newspapers

- ▶ Collected 47 scientific publications of ADHD in the 1990s that generated 347 newspaper articles
- ▶ Picked the top 10 most echoed publications
- ▶ Then Collected all relevant subsequent studies until 2011

Of the top 10 echoed publications:

- Average publication impact factor: 17 vs 6.4 ($p < .0001$)
- 7 were initial studies – 6 were later refuted or strongly attenuated, 1 was not confirmed or refutes
- 3 were not initial studies – 2 were confirmed, 1 was attenuated



TV Broadcasts: French Study

Investigated how French television reported on three scientific questions relative to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) from 1995 to 2010 (16 years)

- ▶ 1) is ADHD mainly genetic in origin, 2) does methylphenidate treatment decrease the risk of academic underachievement, and 3) are brain imaging techniques able to reveal ADHD in individual patients?
- ▶ Although scientific evidence regarding these questions has evolved during these 16 years, we observed that **nine out of ten TV programs broadcast between 2007 and 2010 still expressed opinions against the current scientific consensus**. The failure of TV programs to reflect the evolution of the scientific knowledge might be related to a biased selection of medical experts.



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Victims, Villains, and Heroes

- ▶ An engaging story has all three elements
- ▶ This story constructions provokes more questions of right and wrong.
- ▶ More positions become the foundations for advocacy
- ▶ Advocacy leads to “social justice”
- ▶ Yet *passion without evidence is blinded advocacy that can be easily manipulated*



Victims, Villains, and Heros

▶ Victims

- Those who suffer undue influence/consequence
- Children, parents, teachers, patients, society

▶ Themes (social, personality, biology)

- ADHD is not a “real” disorder
- The “whole person” is not considered
- Medications are “powerful and dangerous”
- Profit motive over “what’s best for the person”



Victims, Villains, and Heros

▶ Villains

- Those who serve to gain for themselves
- Drug companies, doctors, teachers, parents society

▶ Themes (social, personality, biology)

- They inflate the negative impact of ADHD
“criminals, drop-outs, drug addicts”
- They convince you “they can’t control it”
- “Profit” motive over “safety”



Victims, Villains, and Heros

▶ Heroes

- Those that save the victim and identify the villain
- Patients, parents, advocates, journalists, society

▶ Themes (social, personality, biology)

- ADHD is not a “real” disorder
- Let’s understand and help the “person”
- ADHD is a “gift” and provides specific talents
- Let’s identify villains and hold them “accountable”



Conclusion about Media Representation

- ▶ “Extreme polarised representations of ADHD are used to construct moral panics about public safety and the risks presented by dangerous adult males with ADHD, warning of the dire consequences of neglecting to medicate boys with ADHD.
- ▶ Alternatively, they warn of the social consequences and dangers of labeling and medicating naughty boys.
- ▶ Perhaps, the most worrying aspect of this is those stories that draw on scientific research to construct arguments that bear very little reference to the work accomplished by the science itself.”



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Media Influence on Parents: Scare the Parents

- ▶ There was a common feeling among parents that media reports presented ADHD in a negative light, often in the context of undesirable and at times violent or criminal behavior. (Jackson and Peters 2008) **Disorder scare**
- ▶ Many parents expressed that the media displayed the worst possible outcomes of stimulant treatment (Taylor et al. 2006) **Medication scare**
- ▶ Common parental concerns stemmed from media reports that claimed that stimulants were being overprescribed in children (Charach et al 2006) as a result of some doctor's lax prescription practices (Taylor et al, 2006) **Diagnosis scare**



Media Influence on Parents: Shame the Parents

- ▶ Concern about media portrayal of stimulant medications as an easy way out for families who were reluctant to invest time and efforts to address the children's troublesome behaviors was common among parents (Charach et al. 2006; Taylor et al. 2006)
- ▶ Parents felt that media reports not only focused on side effects of treatment, but that they also evoked a communal sense of parental blame for initiating stimulant treatment for their children
- ▶ ...it raised parental doubts and concerns about the need for medication and medication side effects, and made parents become conscious of how others judged their parenting capabilities



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NYT “The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder” Dec 15, 2013

- ▶ Referring to a 6 minutes video of a doctor–patient interview, as part of a Medscape article on adult ADHD
- ▶ “But as he reviewed the video in September, Dr. Goodman reconsidered its message to untrained doctors about how quickly the disorder can be assessed and said, ‘That was not an acceptable way to evaluate and conclude that the patient has A.D.H.D.’”.
- ▶ Readers’ impression: Doctors make diagnosis in minutes.
- ▶ He deliberately excluded that the video was part of a 2500+ word article with 86 scientific reference that was estimated to take physicians 2.5 hours to complete.



Local Media vs. National Media

Local Journalists:

- want to get the story right but may have more limited resources
- are readily available by email and social media
- are more receptive to people's input and community interests

National Journalists:

- may have a subtext agenda
- operate at more of a distance, can be less responsive
- are more interested in "the big picture" issues

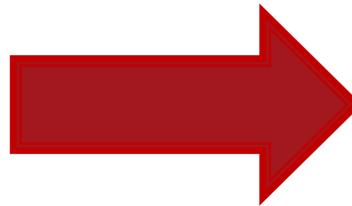
Conclusion

- ▶ Identify the elements of the story (victim, villain, hero)
- ▶ Identify the “learning” of the journalist
- ▶ Ask questions not answered in the article
- ▶ And remember:

The credibility of the information is dependent on the intent of the provider



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Our next Ask the Expert Webinar

The Relationship between ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder



With guest expert
Ericka L. Wodka, Ph.D., ABPP-CN

Tuesday, February 5, 3-4 PM (Eastern)

To register please visit us at
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