



National
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Ask the Expert Webinar Chat Series

Presented by the
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www.Help4ADHD.org
(800) 233-4050
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Ask the Expert

A Pattern of Struggles: ADHD and the Older Adult

Martin Wetzel, MD



**A recording of today's webinar will be available
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Ask the Expert

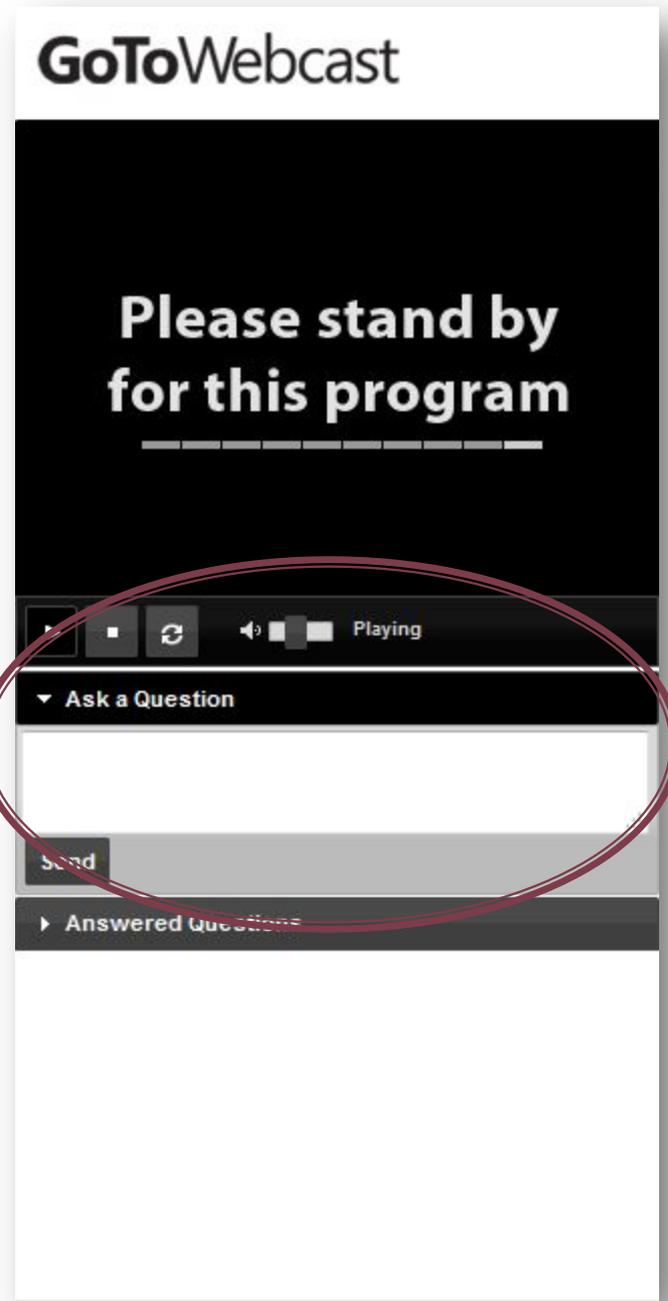
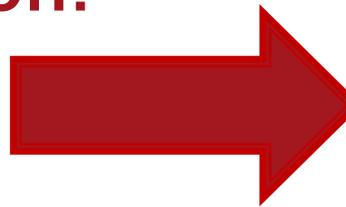
A Pattern of Struggles: ADHD and the Older Adult



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To Ask A Question:





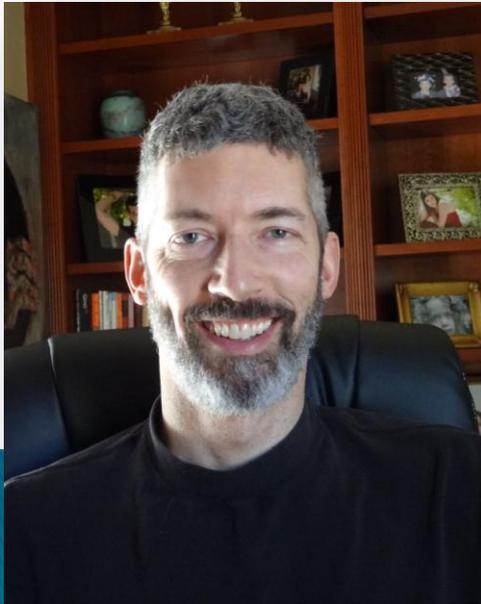
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Disclosures

- Dr. Wetzel has no competing interests to report.
 - Dr. Wetzel authored The Adult ADHD Handbook for Patients, Family and Friends in 2011.
 - Some medications discussed during this presentation may not be FDA approved for the conditions presented.
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Definitions

- ADHD:
WWW.CHADD.ORG & WWW.Help4ADHD.org
- Older Adult:
For the purposes of most studies this is 50+
(or anyone older than you or me).

What's Happening

- More patients are reaching older adulthood
 - 11000 every day eligible for Medicare.
 - More studies are being published on ADHD in older adults.
 - More patients are seeking evaluation for cognitive concerns.
- 

What's Not Happening

- Currently there are very few studies of ADHD and older adults in the United States.
 - There are limited studies of medication and treating ADHD in older adults.
 - Medical education systems do a poor job of teaching about ADHD.
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More Studies Published

- The first papers (3) about older adults with ADHD were published in 2008.
 - Several excellent epidemiology studies of the prevalence of ADHD in older adults.
 - Several studies have examined the effects of ADHD on the lives of older adults.
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More Studies Published

- The prevalence of ADHD in older adults (50+) is about 3%.
 - This is slightly lower than younger adults (4%)
- Studies show ADHD does negatively affect the quality of life for older adults, but perhaps less than younger adults.

Limited Studies

- ADHD in older adults seems to respond well to the same stimulant medications as it does in younger adults, adolescents and children.
 - Limited data suggests these medications are safe for use in older adults with ADHD.
- 

What's Not Happening

- There are very few medication studies examining the safety and effectiveness of stimulants and other medications for older adults with ADHD.
 - Manor et al studied 11 adults 55+ with ADHD who were prescribed stimulants.
 - Lensing et al surveyed 149 adults 50+ with ADHD in Norway to assess their experience with stimulants.

What's Not Happening

- There are few studies of ADHD in older adults in the United States.
 - Many more studies come from Europe (especially Norway and Sweden).
- 

What's Not Happening

- Medical education about ADHD, and outpatient psychiatry in general, remains inadequate.
 - Training on ADHD—if it exists at all—is limited in medical schools and residency programs (including psychiatry programs).
 - Consequently clinicians and researchers have a 'blind spot' when it comes to ADHD.
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ADHD and Dementia

- The studies are limited and there is both good news and bad news.

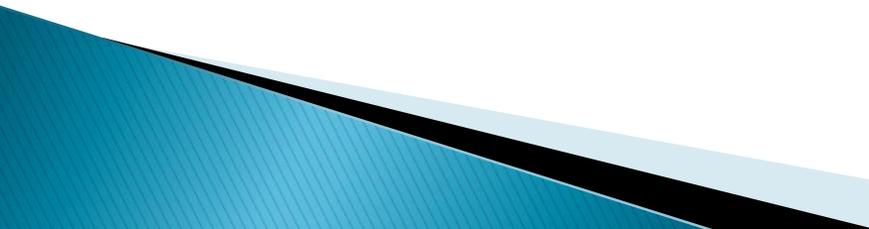
The Good News

- There is no evidence to link ADHD and Alzheimer's dementia.
 - People with ADHD do not seem to be at an increased risk for getting Alzheimer's.

The Bad News

- One study found a possible association between ADHD and the development of a rarer form of dementia (Lewy body dementia).
 - The study raises more questions than it answers, and will need to be followed up to confirm the findings.
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The Really Bad News

- The poor understanding of ADHD in the healthcare system leads to poor care of older adults seeking evaluation of cognitive issues.
 - Studies of dementia do not screen for ADHD.
 - Memory clinics do not screen for ADHD.
 - Clinicians most likely to treat older adults (Internists, Family Practice, Psychiatrists) do not screen for ADHD.
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ADHD & Older Adults: What's Needed

- Medical education about ADHD--at all stages of life--must be included in training programs.
 - Research studies on related topics like memory and aging need to consider that some of the subjects enrolled may have ADHD.
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ADHD & Older Adults: What's Needed

▶ **Advocacy**

- ▶ Advocacy from health care providers who treat ADHD for better training.
 - ▶ Advocacy from patients with ADHD and their loved ones.
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Conclusion

- ADHD is a relatively common condition found in older adults that has negative consequences.
 - Although studies are limited, ADHD in older adults responds well to the same treatment as younger patients and is safe.
 - There is no link between ADHD and Alzheimer's dementia.
 - We all need to advocate for better training of healthcare providers to diagnose and manage ADHD at every point in life.
- 



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Ask the Expert

Your Active Preschooler: Could it be ADHD? What to do

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 3 p.m.

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