

# Helping Families Understand Advances and Treatments

## Revised *ADHD Parents Medication Guide* Is Now Available

by Soleil Gregg, MA, and Theodore A. Petti, MD, MPH

**ADHD HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY DIAGNOSED** in children and adults and both its diagnosis and treatment have come under scathing criticism. This leads the general public, including parents of individuals with ADHD, to be puzzled as to how and what to do. To provide accurate, up-to-date information, the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) has released a revised edition of its *ADHD Parents Medication Guide* (2013). This second edition builds on the first *Guide* (2007) and includes updates on research, children with ADHD in school, transition of adolescents with ADHD into college and adulthood, and more effective treatments.

The *Guide* was developed in collaboration with the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and developed by a workgroup of the AACAP's Pediatric Pharmacology Initiative, which included representatives from CHADD and other professional and advocacy organizations. CHADD was also involved in developing the 2007 *Guide* and collaborated on its prototype, *Medical Management of Children with Attention Deficit Disorders*, which became part of the first *CHADD Educators Manual* (1992). CHADD disseminated thousands of copies of the *Manual*, so CHADD and AACAP have a long history of working together to inform families and the public about evidence-based, best practices for treating ADHD.

Having access to such a useful tool is particularly important, since the past decade has witnessed advances on numerous research fronts into the biological basis for ADHD and its treatment. The foundation for insights and recommendations found in the *Guide* are based mainly upon this research. Even as advances in detailing this multifaceted disorder are being made, critics continue to question the diagnosis and the role of medication in treatment. Some have even asserted that medications have no long-term benefit for youth with ADHD, are being used in high-poverty areas to fix social ills, and have bad side effects. However, these critics ignore the evidence from research over the past decade that has increased our understanding of ADHD and effective treatments for individuals with ADHD.

The *Guide* offers advice and answers to concerns commonly voiced by families and the general public. Issues of concern are addressed

in a reader-friendly question-and-answer format and include questions such as the following: *What is ADHD? What causes ADHD? How can I find out if my child has ADHD? Why are more boys than girls diagnosed with ADHD? Why are more children being diagnosed with ADHD? How does ADHD affect my child's ability to form friendships? What types of treatments are effective? and Will medication cure my child?*

Other topics covered in the *Guide* include choices of medication, side effects of medication, ADHD and school, psychosocial and behavioral treatments, unproven treatments, and transition to college and adulthood. The final section provides a compendium of national organizations with contact information; ADHD-related publications in English and Spanish; and recommended readings for children, teens, college students, families, and caregivers.

The *Guide* has been well reviewed and critiqued by the sponsoring and collaborating organizations. We hope the *Guide* will aid families to better understand the advances being made in ADHD and its treatment and will serve as a useful tool for clinicians caring for individuals with this disorder. The *Guide* is available free to the public on the AACAP website ([aacap.org](http://aacap.org)). 

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