Misdiagnosis of ADHD in Black, Indigenous and People of Color

Khadijah Abdulrasaq: Worcester Technical High School
Zaynab Khemmich: Al-Noor Academy
Eleanor Owusu-Ansah: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School
Overview

01 Humanizing Connections

02 What is a health disparity? What is ADHD?

03 Symptoms, Diagnosis & Treatments

04 The ADHD Inequity

05 National data and Massachusetts Connections

06 Solutions
Our Connections

- Impact on Mental Health
- Identifying as BIPOC
- Personal Connections to those with ADHD
What is a Health Disparity?

Avoidable inequalities faced by a marginalized group, in comparison to other groups, based on various factors including age, sex, ethnicity, and income.
What is ADHD?
ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder)

Chronic neurodevelopmental disorder that carries into adulthood.

Causes individuals to have trouble with paying attention and controlling impulsive behaviors.

3 Types of ADHD:

• Hyperactive
• Inattentive
• Combined
Why is This a Health Disparity?

BIPOC individuals with ADHD are often not given adequate care, are misdiagnosed and not believed, and are recognized less in comparison to white people.

ADHD-linked behaviors are often considered more socially acceptable for males.

ADHD in women is less recognized because research performed on women with ADHD is many years behind.
Girls
- Display the inattentive portion of the disorder
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Difficulty keeping track of belongings
- Forgetful in everyday tasks

Boys
- Display the hyperactive portion of the disorder
- Emotional outbursts
- Often interrupting others and talking excessively
- Difficulty in participating in leisure activities quietly

General
- Trouble concentrating
- Daydreaming
- Difficulty sustaining relationships
- Lack of impulse control
- Issues with comprehension/memor recall
How ADHD is diagnosed:

ADHD diagnosis is not a simple process and there is no actual test, but a manual is followed

- American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual

By having each professional follow the same manual, it ensures that all cases of ADHD were diagnosed, following the same standards.
Treatments

**Stimulants**
Stimulants are usually prescribed for ADHD, but they don't work for everybody. The most popular brand medications are Concerta, Ritalin, Adderall, and Dexedrine.

**Behavior Therapy**
Slowly helps individuals manage the condition by offering rewards for completing goals *(positive reinforcements)*. Children usually take medication along with therapy.

**Non-stimulants**
Non-stimulants do not work as quickly as stimulant medication, however their effects can last up to 24 hours. Popular brand medications include: Straterra, Catapres, and Tenex.
ADHD Inequity

- Poor Access to Quality Evaluation and Treatment
- Mistrust
- Cultural Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness
- Religious Beliefs
- Lack of Culturally Competent practitioners
National Data

Prevalence of diagnoses with ADHD by race of individuals presenting similar symptoms

Prevalence of diagnoses with ADHD by race

- White: 57.3%
- Hispanic: 19.3%
- African American: 15.7%
- Other: 7.6%
Massachusetts Connection

State-Based prevalence of ADHD diagnosis and treatment

Massachusetts
Range: 9-<12%
Percentage: 10.2%

"People with ADHD are lazy and un-motivated"
ADHD symptom behaviors may look like laziness or lack of motivation, but it stems from real difficulty in functioning. All children want to succeed and get praised for their good work.

"People with ADHD are results of bad parenting"
ADHD is caused by brain differences, not bad parenting. However, ineffective parenting practices such as inconsistent limit-setting, worsen its expression. A number of proven parenting techniques can help children with ADHD manage their behaviors.

"ADHD is a disorder of childhood"
Long-term studies of children diagnosed with ADHD show that ADHD is a lifespan disorder. Studies of children with ADHD show that ADHD persists from childhood to adolescence in 50%–80% of cases, and into adulthood in 35%–65% of cases (Owens et al. 2015).

**Misconception:** a view or opinion that is incorrect because based on faulty thinking or understanding.
Ways to Combat ADHD Misdiagnosis in BIPOC Communities

- Diversifying the healthcare workforce
- Acknowledgement and awareness
- Establishing and improving cultural competence
- Destigmatization
The Attention Deficit Disorder Association is a community of supportive ADHD individuals who pave the way for others struggling with the condition. The ADDA creates an encouraging, welcoming, and safe environment through empowerment and recognition.

Children and Adults with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (CHADD) is a group of dedicated volunteers from around the country in order to foster a safe growing environment for individuals struggling with ADHD.
Citations

• ADHD and mental health. Mind. (n.d.). https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/adhd-and-mental-health/#:~:text=We%20know%20that%20if%20you,with%20people%20who%20have%20ADHD.
Questions?