

Study Finds More Children Have ADHA

10% of N.C. School Students May Be Affected By Disorder

As many as 10 percent of North Carolina school children may be affected by attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, according to a new federal study.

The survey of elementary school students in Johnston County also shows that as many as 7 percent of children are taking medication to control ADHD. The survey was taken by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in Research Triangle Park.

Previously, estimates put the prevalence of ADHD at 3 percent to 5 percent of children. Andrew Rowland, the NIEHS project's lead investigator, said that a few regional studies hinted at higher numbers; but they were based on school records of who was taking stimulant medications commonly used to treat ADHD. His study is based on parent surveys.

"The fact that 7 percent are on medication, is a lot of kids. In fourth and fifth grade, over 15 percent of the white boys were taking stimulant medications," said Rowland, an epidemiologist at the University of New Mexico. "In the past, those have been seen as outlandish, unbelievable rates, and we're thinking they're not that unusual."

The percentage of ADHD diagnoses among white children and black children was similar, though white children were more likely to be taking medication.

Rowland said he thought that might be because of a lack of access to medical care among black children or a reluctance in the black community to use medication.

The Johnston County study, which began in 1987, asked the parents of all 7,333 children in grades one through five to participate, and 83 percent of them agreed. The participating parents from 17 schools were asked whether their children had ever been diagnosed with ADHD and whether the children were on medication for it.

The scientists said that Johnston County's mix of rural, suburban and urban populations makes it representative of the state.

ADHD refers to disorders related to attention problems and comes in three subtypes. Patricia Collins, a psychologist and director of the Psychoeducational Clinic at N.C. State University, said that most ADHD cases that come through her clinic each year are "inattentive."

"What we all think of as ADHD is the hyperactive little boy swinging from the chandelier," Collins said. "What I'm seeing here is far more of the inattentive type. Those children are not hyperactive. In fact, many of them are slow, sluggish kinds of kids. Kids who have trouble following directions, don't finish on time, are disorganized and daydreaming."

Hyperactivity and impulsiveness mark a second form of ADHD, while combined ADHD includes symptoms of both. The NIEHS study found that about 5 percent of the girls had been diagnosed with ADHD, compared with 15 percent of the boys. Three times as many boys as girls took medication.

Jack Naftel, a psychiatrist and one of the study's authors, said that the gender difference was expected, though he suspects that cases in girls are under diagnosed.

Untreated, ADHD can be a devastating disorder. ADHD children are more likely to fail in school and to have behavioral and substance abuse problems.

The disorder, which may be successfully treated with stimulants such as Ritalin, has been at the center of heated debate in recent years because some see it as a parental problem, not a disorder, and others worry that the nation is medicating millions of boys for being boys.

The prevalence report was published in last month's issue of the American Journal of Public Health.



HARTSFIELD

**For District
Court Judge**



QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED:

Law Degree - Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Attorney with over 10 years legal experience in the civil, juvenile and criminal courts.

COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

Born in Forsyth County, the only child of Delray and Doris Hartsfield, prominent retired educators.

CHURCH

Christian, St. Paul United Methodist Church - Chair Higher Education and Campus Ministry, Teaches Vacation Bible School, Announcement Clerk.

"I will use my more than ten years of legal experience in the Civil, Criminal and Juvenile Courts, along with my forty-seven years of life experiences, before making a decision. Fairness and impartiality to all parties will be applied to the best of my ability. This election is an opportunity for the voters of Forsyth County to choose their District Court Judge."

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on May 7th**

HARTSFIELD

**For District
Court Judge**

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