

AUSTRALASIAN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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TIME TO LOOK AT EVIDENCE BASED ALTERNATIVES FOR ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Professor Kerry Phelp, president of the Australasian Integrative Medicine Association, says it's time to look at evidence based multi-disciplinary and lifestyle approaches as first line therapy for treating people with ADHD.

The WA Raine ADHD study made international headlines last week, after finding stimulant medications for treatment of ADHD such as Ritalin and dexamphetamine failed to offer any significant long-term academic, social or emotional benefits, and had no significant effect on depression, self-perception or social functioning at age 14.(1) The researchers also identified cardiovascular side-effects in children taking stimulants.

The NHMRC draft guidelines on ADHD treatment emphasise a multimodal approach is recommended for treatment of ADHD that includes psychosocial management strategies (education, behaviour modification, social skills training), family support, educational interventions and multidisciplinary care. (2)

Professor Kerry Phelp emphasizes "whilst stimulants may play a role in short-term alleviation of symptoms, there can be an important clinical role in using various lifestyle and Integrative approaches to treating symptoms of ADHD."

"Research supports change of lifestyle factors like playing outdoors in a natural environment such as a park, correcting nutritional intake, excluding additives and sugars, avoiding television and attending to sleep problems can help. Together with psychosocial and behavioural therapy, these should be first line therapies that may have a synergistic effect in helping people with ADHD."



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(1) Grant Smith, Dr Brad Jongeling, Dr Petra Hartmann, Craig Russell, Professor Lou Landau, Chair MICADHD. Long-term outcomes associated with stimulant medication in the treatment of ADHD in children

http://www.health.wa.gov.au/publications/documents/MICADHD_Raine_ADHD_Study_report_022010.pdf

Accessed 23rd February, 2010

(2) NHMRC ADHD draft guidelines:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/adhd/NHMRC-draft-ADHD-guidelines.pdf Accessed 23rd Feb 2010