

Young people with ADHD 'more likely' to come from deprived neighbourhoods

6 April 2018, by Emma Rayner



Credit: University of Nottingham

Children and young adults diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are twice as likely to come from the most socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods in England than the least deprived, new research has found.

The study, led by academics at the University of Nottingham and funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), shows that there is also a difference in diagnosis by regions in England, with the greatest difference in the East of England and the smallest difference in London.

The results, taken in tandem with previous research findings, highlight the need for further research into why there are such differences in the diagnosis of ADHD across the country. The overall number of [people](#) diagnosed with ADHD (1%) is considerably lower than would be expected based on other studies done in the community (3 to 5 percent).

The researchers say that doctors and other healthcare professionals should use the results of the study to make sure that health and educational services are available for young people with ADHD in more disadvantaged areas. Future research is also required to explore why there is an under-diagnosis or under-recording of ADHD in children and young people.

The patients in this study, all aged between 3 and

17 years old at the time of their diagnosis, were registered with the Clinical Practice Research Datalink – a large national database of general practice (GP) medical records.

Dr. Vibhore Prasad, who led the study at the University's School of Medicine, said: "ADHD is a chronic condition which results in hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention in more than one setting, for example at school and at home. It can have a significant impact on people's lives. Children and adolescents with ADHD may struggle at school academically and socially and in adulthood it can seriously affect employment and independence, family life and relationships.

"Accurate and timely diagnosis of the condition is crucial because it can be treated using medication or therapy or a combination of both. This can make a real and practical difference to people with ADHD and families.

"More research is needed to understand why people with ADHD are more likely to come from deprived neighbourhoods, as our study suggests. There is still a lot we do not know about how children and young people are diagnosed with ADHD."

The research used GP records, from approximately 5,000 patients with ADHD and 490,000 without, to study the proportion of [children](#) and [young people](#) with ADHD by age, sex, socio-economic deprivation and English health authority region. Prevalence of ADHD in the most [deprived areas](#) was double that of the least deprived areas, with a linear trend from least to most deprived across all regions in England.

The ADHD study has been published in the *BMJ's Archives of Disease in Childhood*.

More information: Vibhore Prasad et al. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: variation by

socioeconomic deprivation, *Archives of Disease in Childhood* (2018). DOI: [10.1136/archdischild-2017-314470](https://doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2017-314470)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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