



Women with ADHD

Come out of hiding, Ms. ADHDIVA, Why are you trying to fit in when you were born to stand out?

According to Dr Shabeer Jeeva a specialist child and adult psychiatrist, many women realise they have ADHD for the first time, when one of their children is being diagnosed. While completing their child's assessment forms, they start to get a inkling but when they come in for their child's interactive assessment many parents say "that me", "I do that". It is then that they recognise themselves and realise that they have been living their lives with undiagnosed ADHD. Finally they begin to understand the problems they have experienced throughout their lives."

"Most women fall into the 'predominantly inattentive' type. Their ADHD went unnoticed at school because girls tend to work harder for teacher approval and to hide their inattention difficulties. They are quite, sit in the back of the class, coast along and are 'dismissed' as average even if they are just making the grade."

"Teachers are trained to look for hyperactivity and spend their time concentrating on the hyperactive boys" says Dr Jeeva. "Girls manifest hyperactivity differently, they are hyper-social, hyper-reactive emotionally or hyper-talkative."

Unrecognized and untreated, it can have devastating implications on health, family and education. Women

with ADHD are also more likely to struggle with comorbidities like anxiety, depression etc. and receive treatment for this while the ADHD is overlooked.

The reason for this Dr Jeeva explains is that few health professionals have received training in diagnosing adults with ADHD and even fewer in the diagnosis of women. It is a challenge to find someone who is aware of the different ways ADHD presents in women.

ADHD affects multiple aspects of behaviour, mood, cognitive abilities and daily life. It can be the cause of – excessive conflict, distress in marriage, loss of a job, financial problems.

Dr Jeeva says "Treatment must be holistic because each woman is an individual and has a different combination of the 3 main sub-types of ADHD – Inattentive, Hyperactive and Impulsive and therefore has different symptoms, needs and challenges like functioning and impairment. Treatment can be a combination of medication, life style changes, psychotherapy, stress management, coaching or professional organizing. "

He explains that **Estrogen is Brain food** for women. It waits at the post-synaptic junction, and encourages neurotransmitters to make their Evil Knievel leaps in the synapse. Recent studies

Be PROUD of your ADHD.

Of being the odd one out. It's not a bad thing. You will have your share of challenges, but being ADHD means you have a lot of gifts and talents, that many people only wished they had.

Get the real benefits from your ADHD traits, tap into your brilliance and bring out the maverick in you—all in a way that feels comfortable and true to who you are.

You don't do things like others, you are wired differently, but you don't need to beat yourself up because of it.

At this point in your life you have a choice, you can choose to see your ADHD as a disability or a difference.

Break the cycle of overwhelm by embracing simplicity and better organisation through planning.

When you begin to look at what's right with you, and what you are capable of under the circumstances, you open up a world of possibilities.

The Delights of ADHD

- ◇ **Distraction** "...oh, look, there goes a rabbit!"
- ◇ **Inattention** "But I didn't see the stop sign officer."
- ◇ **Boredom** "Waiting in line makes ne nuts!"
- ◇ **Impulsivity** "I just bought a hot air balloon!"
- ◇ **Hyper-focus** "I just couldn't bring myself to stop!"
- ◇ **Sleep issues** "My brain won't shut down."
- ◇ **Mood/emotion swings** "Up-down-up."

The Delights of AGE

- ◇ **Forgetfulness** "I missed my yoga class again"
- ◇ **Foggy thinking** "What were we talking about?"
- ◇ **Power Surges** "Is it hot in here or ...?"
- ◇ **Irritability** "The light's green... GO darn it!"
- ◇ **Physical Changes** "My migraines are worse!"
- ◇ **Sleep issues** "I'm awake, tired, hot, cold, restless."
- ◇ **Mood swings** "I'm happy, I'm depressed."

have shown that estrogen can function like a neurotransmitter, inserting itself directly into the cell. We know that some women experience significant problems with moodiness and depression during the pre-menstrual period, postpartum period, peri-menopause and menopause because of low estrogen states. Declining estrogen affect cognitive function during the menstrual cycle and more dramatically in menopause. When a women tells her doctor that the ADHD medication is not as effective as it was, many will increase the medication, without taking into account that it will not be effective if the problem is because of declining estrogen.

"A woman's ADHD symptoms will increase as her estrogen levels fall because the neurotransmitters have become accustomed to the "encouragement" of estrogen," say Jeeva, "In order to get an accurate diagnosis you need to find a professional who understands that medication can be affected by hormone levels (monthly cycle, pregnancy, menopause) and who is experienced in treating adult ADHD, especially women."

By Tanya Sibilant



COMORBIDITIES (ADDITIONAL BAGGAGE)

chronic stress, psychological distress, dysphoria, sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, social phobia, low self-esteem, compulsive overeating

Symptoms commonly DESCRIBED by women with ADHD.

Is it any wonder that your daily activities can be so overwhelming?

- ◆ Hypersensitivity to noise, touch, smell; Women with small children are often overwhelmed by the constant interruptions, the noise level and commotion at home .
- ◆ Feelings of low self-worth; Women may feel they should be able to "do it all" and feel defeated when they can't keep up. Juggling parenting and work responsibilities can simply be overwhelming
- ◆ Hypersensitivity to criticism; Again, high expectations since childhood of being a "good girl" can make women with ADHD more vulnerable to these sensitivities
- ◆ Poor sense of time, often running late
- ◆ Being emotionally charged and easily upset; This is exacerbated during hormonal changes
- ◆ Starting projects but seeming unable to finish them; Do you have piles of empty photo books? Heaps of unfinished sewing projects?
- ◆ Taking on too much; On top of work and parenting, there is often the need for women to take on even more, like volunteering, helping out with school-related functions, making meals from scratch, etc.
- ◆ Difficulty remembering names; This often gets worse before, during and after menopause
- ◆ Saying things without thinking, often hurting others' feelings
- ◆ Appearing self-absorbed
- ◆ Poor math and/or writing skills
- ◆ Seeming to not want to hear what others are saying; This is especially difficult for women, who often want to connect socially, but have difficulty doing so
- ◆ Engaging in addictive behaviours: shopping, TV (soaps!) and eating are commonly seen.
- ◆ Poor handwriting; an embarrassing issue - society seems more accepting of poor penmanship in men
- ◆ Difficulty with boring, repetitive tasks, such as laundry and other house-keeping chores
- ◆ Spending time ruminating
- ◆ Difficulty making decisions; Grocery shopping is often painful, with all the choices available in stores today
- ◆ Clumsiness and poor coordination
- ◆ Tiring easily, or conversely, difficulty sitting still
- ◆ Difficulty falling asleep and difficulty waking up the next morning; Again, made worse during menopause

For more information visit www.adhdclinicjeeva.com or email jeeva788@rogers.com or phone 011-6841621

Dr Jeeva is an ADHD patient, with an ADHD child. He has 25 years Canadian experience in depression, anxiety, panic attacks and executive burnout.

He specialises in child, adolescent and adult ADHD

