



## Surely they'll outgrow ADHD!

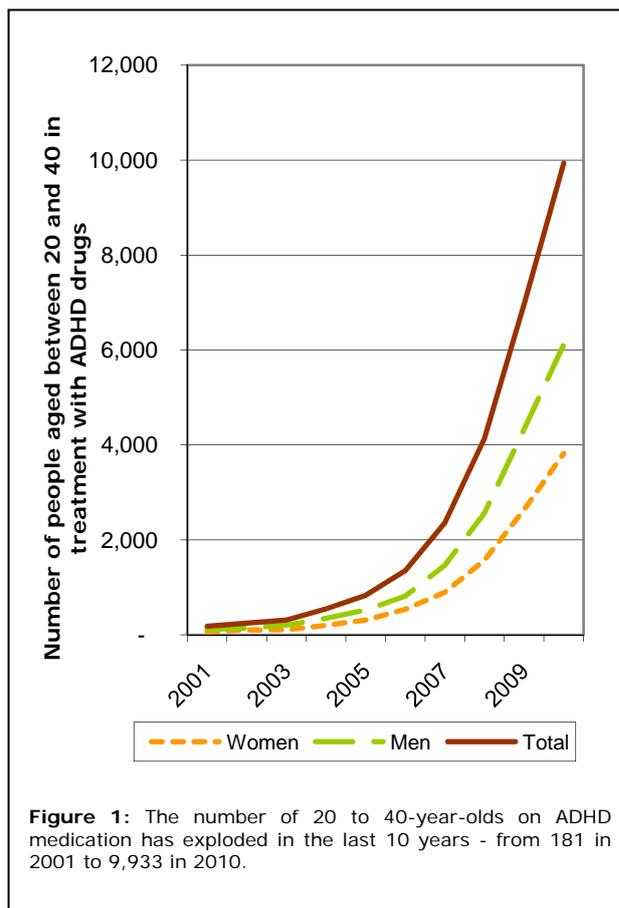
*Most people connect ADHD medicines with noisy boys in primary school. But in Denmark, the medicine is increasingly given to adults who have often tried several other types of nervous system drugs before starting on ADHD drugs. It occurs even though there is limited knowledge about the possible side effects in adults.*

When an ADHD sufferer has symptoms that make it impossible to function properly in everyday situations, it may be necessary to start treatment with Ritalin®, Motiron®, Strattera® or other medicines that can ease the symptoms. But these medicines are not approved for adults, because the knowledge about their effect in adults is limited: use during pregnancy, risk of abuse and adults' generally higher risk of cardiovascular diseases, which is a well-known adverse reaction of the medicine.

### DAMP, ADHD or hyperkinetic disorder?

DAMP is an abbreviation for Deficits in Attention, Motor control and Perception used in the Nordic region. In everyday speech, the diagnosis of DAMP has been replaced by the international diagnosis ADHD – Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. In the healthcare system, the condition is officially termed as hyperkinetic disorder.

In spite of this, the number of adults who take medicine for ADHD has increased explosively in the last 10 years in Denmark - especially among the 20 to 40-year-olds. In 2001, some 180 adults aged between 20 to 40 years took an ADHD drug. In 2010, this figure had risen to nearly 10,000. This is an increase of approx. 5,500 %, or put differently: for every person in ADHD treatment in 2001, there are now 55.



**Figure 1:** The number of 20 to 40-year-olds on ADHD medication has exploded in the last 10 years - from 181 in 2001 to 9,933 in 2010.

The majority of the adults who start ADHD treatment are no strangers to the healthcare system. One in every eight has been in ADHD treatment since childhood or adolescence. Others have received treatment with one or several medicines that act on the nervous system in the years prior to starting on an ADHD drug.

### Traits of an adult with ADHD (symptoms may vary):

- is restless and finds it difficult to relax
- finds it difficult to stay focused and concentrated
- is distracted easily
- appears forgetful
- has difficulty with organising time
- has mood swings and a hot temper
- is sensitive to stress and has a low frustration threshold
- cannot plan and organise things
- speaks and acts without thinking through the consequences

Source: The Danish ADHD Association

In fact, as many as 75% of the 20 to 40-year-olds who started on ADHD medicine in adulthood, had tried antidepressants, antipsychotics, strong painkillers or anxiety-relieving products before.

**For further information,** please contact Bine Kjølner Bjerregaard on [bkb@dkma.dk](mailto:bkb@dkma.dk) or +45 4488 9104.

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