

The ADHD Explosion: Myths, Medication, Money, and Today's Push for Performance

By Stephen P. Hinshaw, Richard M. Scheffler

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Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most controversial and misunderstood medical conditions today. With skyrocketing rates of diagnosis and medication treatment, it has generated a firestorm of controversy. Alarming questions have been raised about ADHD in recent years, including:

- *Why are one in nine children and adolescents in the U.S. now diagnosed with ADHD, with projected rates still rising?
- *Why are nearly 70% of those diagnosed with ADHD prescribed medication?
- *What is causing the fast-rising diagnosis and medication of *adults*? And why are over a quarter of all college students using stimulants for academic performance?
- *In some southern states, why are boys over 9 years old diagnosed at rates of almost one in three?
- *Can we trust the stories we read and hear about ADHD, even in major media outlets?
- *What is driving the current ADHD explosion--is it parents, doctors, schools, culture, the healthcare system, or Big Pharma? And will it end?

Stephen Hinshaw, a distinguished psychologist, and Richard Scheffler, an eminent health economist, uniquely blend clinical wisdom, current science, medical and school policy, and global trends to debunk myths and set the record straight in *The ADHD Explosion*. They describe the origins of ADHD and its huge costs to society; the science behind its causes as well as medication and behavioral treatment; and the variation in diagnosis and treatment across the U.S. Dealing directly with stimulants as "smart pills," they describe the epidemic of medicalization, arguing that accurate diagnosis and well-monitored care could ease the staggering economic burden linked to ADHD.

In innovative ways, they unravel the many poignant issues facing children, teachers, clinicians, and family members who contend with ADHD each day. The recommendations they make can improve the quality of life for those touched by ADHD and potentially improve the productivity and safety of all society.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A new book, *The ADHD Explosion* by Stephen Hinshaw and Richard Scheffler, looks at this extraordinary increase [in ADHD diagnoses]. What's the explanation? Some rise in environmental toxins? Worse parenting? Better detection? Drs. Hinshaw and Scheffler... present some striking evidence that the answer lies, at least partly, in changes in educational policy." -*Wall Street Journal*

"*The ADHD Explosion*, released this week by Oxford University Press, chronicles the steep increase in ADHD diagnoses in the US over the last two decades." -*LA Times*

"This powerful, fact-packed survey is complex, thought-provoking, and urgent." --*Publishers Weekly*

"This is a unique, highly informative, science-based, and hence incredibly useful book about ADHD and the numerous controversies surrounding it. No disorder in recent times has been so controversial, so terribly misrepresented and sensationalized in the media, or so polarizing among the general public as this one. The authors do a superb job cutting through the nonsense with facts to portray ADHD both sensibly and sensitively. While a very useful book for parents and educators, professionals, students, and journalists will also find this book to be invaluable for its clear representation of what is known about ADHD and for its even-handedness and thoroughness in explaining the source of the many public and professional controversies."-Russell A. Barkley, PhD, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Medical University of South Carolina

"If you think that ADHD is simply an invention of mental health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry, then *The ADHD Explosion* will change your mind. This book elucidates the true personal and social costs of the syndrome for children, their families, schools, and communities."-Jeffrey E. Harris, MD PhD, Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"This is a wonderfully readable and very timely book, authored by two of the world's pre-eminent scientists. [...] They have produced the most thoughtful, scholarly, and simultaneously intuitively complete and 'commonsensical' exposition of 'what ADHD really is' to date. Despite the intricacies of the many lines of research that converge on this seemingly ubiquitous disorder, they have distilled these scientific complexities into a seamless, spell-binding story that accurately presents our current scientific knowledge about ADHD." -Peter S. Jensen, MD, President and CEO, The Reach Institute, Professor of Psychiatry and Vice-Chair for Research, Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, The Mayo Clinic

"At a time when proposals about disability and health insurance policy have given intense focus to ADHD, it is important to have a clear sense of what the illness is, the consequences of carrying the disorder, the complex issues around the role that ADHD has taken in education and social interactions, and the opportunities for treatment of the condition. Anyone serious about tackling policy issues concerning ADHD should read this book." -Richard G. Frank, PhD, Margaret T. Morris Professor of Health Economics, Department of Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School

"In their well-written and thoughtful book, Hinshaw and Scheffler provide a nuanced view of the *ADHD Explosion*. Provocative without being extreme, this book is thorough and sensitive, policy-relevant, and a major contribution to the literature."-Howard H. Goldman, MD, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore

"The authors provide a wide-ranging and extremely thoughtful assessment of the causes and consequences of ADHD. This book not only dispels many myths but also offers a tangible path forward for children, their parents, and governments." -Thomas Rice, PhD, Distinguished Professor, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health

"In *The ADHD Explosion*, psychologist Stephen P. Hinshaw and health economist Richard M. Scheffler detail the evolution of ADHD from clinical issue to cultural phenomenon. *The ADHD Explosion* fills a much needed gap. It offers a systemic examination of a major health care and economic issue that is too often reduced to overly simplistic conclusions. Hinshaw and Scheffler provide an intelligent presentation of where we are and what we need to consider as we move forward." --Robert Furey, Colleen Furey, *PsycCRITIQUES*

"In this highly informative book, *The ADHD Explosion* psychologist Stephen Hinshaw, PhD, and health economist Richard Scheffler, PhD, address the societal impact, healthcare costs, and long-term outcomes for those affected by ADHD. This unique book is useful for parents, educators, mental health professionals, students, and adults." --Tara Ann Cartwright, *American Medical Writers Association Journal*

About the Author

Stephen P. Hinshaw, PhD, is Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Vice-Chair for Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco. He is also editor of *Psychological Bulletin*.

Richard M. Scheffler, PhD, is Distinguished Professor of Health Economics and Public Policy in the School of Public Health and the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Henderson:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or read a book entitled The ADHD Explosion: Myths, Medication, Money, and Today's Push for Performance? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have various other opinion?

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Hattie Booth:

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