



**GENDER PATTERNS AMONG DSM-IV
ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY
DISORDER SUBTYPES**

VOLUME ONE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined gender patterns among DSM-IV ADHD subtypes in a nationally representative sample of Australian children to address the following research questions:

1) What is the discriminant validity of ADHD subtypes in boys and girls?; and 2) Do the characteristics of boys and girls with ADHD differ?

ADHD subtypes in both the male and the female samples differed on most variables, however the pattern of differences was not always consistent across gender. Male and female subtypes showed a similar pattern of differences for prevalence, age, externalising problems and stimulant use. For example, children with inattentive type were more prevalent, older, had fewer externalising problems and lower stimulant use than those with combined and hyper-impulsive type. However, for internalising problems, impairment and service use, the pattern of subtype differences varied across gender. Among males, the combined type group had more internalising problems, impairment and service use than the other subtype groups, whereas among females, both the combined and inattentive type groups had higher rates for these variables than those with hyper-impulsive type.

With regard to gender differences, boys and girls with ADHD (all subtypes combined) did not differ on any of these variables, except that boys had poorer school functioning and greater stimulant use. However, significant gender by subtype interactions were found for impairment relating to social problems, school functioning and self-esteem. These interactions were consistent with boys being rated as more impaired than girls in the

combined and hyper-impulsive type groups, but equally or less impaired than girls in the inattentive type group, although the differences were not always statistically significant.

The findings of this study suggest that ADHD subtype patterns are influenced by gender and that there may be gender specific risks with regard to ADHD symptom expression. It is recommended that future studies carefully control for those conditions that mimic ADHD symptoms or are comorbid, in order to better assess the discriminant validity of ADHD subtypes and the gender-specific risks associated with high levels of inattentive and hyper-impulsive symptoms.