

ADHD kids need individualized treatment

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New research from The Australian National University is providing strong support for individualised assessment and treatment for children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

A study conducted by postgraduate researcher Lisa Gomes looked at the nature of and differences in attention and [memory](#) between boys with the two most common subtypes of [ADHD](#) and a [control group](#).

"The two most common subtypes, ADHD-Predominantly Inattentive (ADHD-PI) and ADHD-Combined (ADHD-C), share clinically significant problems of inattention, but differ in their clinically significant levels of [hyperactivity](#) and impulsivity," she said.

"Important differences have emerged in the literature about demographic and family characteristics, and psychosocial functioning between ADHD subtypes. Some researchers have therefore theorized that these subtypes are distinct and unrelated disorders.

"Studies that have investigated the nature of the fundamental building blocks of learning - attention and memory - in ADHD have found mixed results pertaining to differences between the subtypes."

Ms. Gomes said the results of her study suggested that whilst both ADHD groups showed significant impairment on the measures of attention and memory, the nature of these was more similar than dissimilar between the ADHD groups.

"On attention tests, the two subtypes performed comparably with some additional selective attention impairments for the ADHD-C group and almost no differences on study measures of memory found between groups," she said.

"However, examining the individualised attention and memory profiles across participants suggested a high degree of heterogeneity within both ADHD

subtypes."

Ms Gomes said ADHD was a common disorder in childhood which could have a significant impact on many facets of a child's life.

"In the school context, children with both ADHD subtypes have been found to display marked problems with their learning," she said.

"The heterogeneous nature of [attention](#) and memory, which are the fundamental building blocks of learning within each ADHD subtype, has clear clinical implications. It reinforces the need for there to be individualised assessment and treatment for children with ADHD in order to properly understand their [learning](#) difficulties."

Provided by Australian National University

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