



# ADDults with ADHD NSW Inc

## Support and ADDvocacy

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### NEWSLETTER

### WINTER EDITION 2008

#### Inside:

MEMBER NEWS	P2
ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT	P3&4
MAXIMISE MEDICARE	P5
ADDULT RESPONSE 'DAILY TELEGRAPH' ARTICLES	P6
ADHD AND SLEEP	P7
JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE - ADD & OCD	P8
WHAT'S NEWS	P9
WHAT'S ON	P10
ADDULT DIARY PAGE	P11
BEEN THERE?	P12

#### NOTICE:

**NEXT AWARENESS AFTERNOON:**  
SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPT 08  
2.00PM - 4.30PM AT  
SYDNEY INST. TAFE -  
HARRIS ST, ULTIMO

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
Saturday 1st Nov, 08  
At 'Turner Hall',  
Sydney Inst. TAFE  
Harris St, Ultimo

**Office Hours:**  
**10.30AM – 2.30PM**  
**TUES, WED & THURS**

**NOTE:** THE OFFICE IS  
CLOSED DURING SCHOOL  
HOLIDAYS. HOWEVER THE  
ANSWER MACHINE AND  
EMAILS ARE CLEARED  
REGULARLY.

## IS AUSTRALIA DRAGGING ITS FEET?

Recent research by the World Health Organisation (WHO), looked at 7,000 workers in ten countries, and found an average of 3.5% had ADHD.

In the study, employed and self-employed workers aged 18-44 were screened for ADHD as part of the "World Mental Health Survey Initiative" in Belgium, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, The Netherlands, Spain, and the USA.

Writing In 'Occupational and Environmental Medicine', the Dutch team said workplace screening should be used to pick up people with the problem. Professor Philip Asherson, an expert in adult ADHD at London's Institute of Psychiatry, said "ADHD should be included in general health screens, in the same way that people would screen for anxiety and depression", but warned they should not be stigmatized.

The study was carried out by a team who are part of a World Health Organisation (WHO) research consortium at Harvard Medical School.

We find it frustrating that the World Health Organisation included adult ADHD in a population Mental Health Survey, but the most recent Australian Mental Health Survey did not. Sadly the Australian government does not recognize the size of the problem, nor have they begun to put adequate clinical services in place.

***The NHMRC (National Health & Medical Research Council) is the foremost medical authority in this country. Hopefully the new Guidelines on ADHD will help us to impress on the Australian government how badly they are "dragging their feet" on this one.***

The WA government has also been caught napping. WA has always come in for more than their share of criticism for having the highest prescription rate in kids with ADHD in Australia. However, the WA Health Department have now realized they had previously mixed the number of adult and child scripts, mistakenly estimating 4.2% of children were taking stimulant medication in WA (assuming that 85% of the scripts were written for children, when it was actually 60%)!!

However, under their *new* reporting system, it would appear the number of adults on stimulants in WA has increased; while the number of children has *decreased* by about 1,000 children from the previous year. Whilst there are several reasons for such a decrease, one needs to be concerned that some families may be shying away from medication because of the hysteria surrounding this whole issue in the media. Ironically, the new figures from WA may indicate that NSW now has the higher prescription rate in children. However the NSW Department of Health has not completed the update on their figures at this time.

**-Joy Toll, Secretary/Editor**

*Wishing all Dads a Happy Father's Day on Sunday 7th September.*