

NHS ADHD Taskforce (March 2024) - *Neurohaven* Summary

1. NHS Launches Major Review of ADHD Services:

- The NHS in England is initiating a significant review of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) services due to concerns regarding a rise in diagnoses.

2. ADHD Overview:

- ADHD is a condition affecting behaviour, characterized by restlessness, trouble concentrating, and impulsive actions according to the NHS.

3. Underdiagnosis and Overdiagnosis Concerns:

- Support groups highlight underdiagnosis and long treatment waits.
- Concerns arise about overdiagnosis, with rogue private clinics offering powerful drugs based on unreliable online assessments.

4. NHS Taskforce and Government Collaboration:

- NHS England collaborates with the government to establish a taskforce aiming to enhance care for individuals with ADHD.
- The taskforce involves expertise from NHS, education, and justice sectors to understand challenges and provide a comprehensive response.

5. Statistics and Social Media Impact:

- ADHD ranks as the second most viewed health condition on the NHS website in 2023, after Covid-19.
- Global social media engagement on ADHD, with #ADHD attracting significant attention on platforms like TikTok.

6. Taskforce Objectives and Stakeholder Engagement:

- Taskforce objectives include assessing ADHD service provision, identifying causes of increased demand, and addressing challenges spanning wider society.
- Engagement with patients, service providers, primary care services, local authorities, schools, educational providers, and clinical teams.
- Expected publication of findings later in the year

7. World Health Organization Definition:

- ADHD defined by WHO as a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity negatively impacting academic, occupational, or social functioning.

8. Leadership Statements:

- Amanda Pritchard, NHS England chief executive, emphasizes the need for timely diagnosis and comprehensive support.
- Steve Russell, NHS England's chief delivery officer, highlights the importance of improving data collection for understanding the scale of the challenge.
- Victoria Atkins, the health secretary, stresses the importance of timely assessment, diagnosis, and comprehensive support for individuals with ADHD.

Dr Ulrich Müller-Sedgwick, spokesperson for the Royal College of Psychiatrists, hailed the initiative, emphasizing the urgency of understanding and addressing the multifaceted impacts of ADHD. With ADHD affecting a significant portion of both children and adults, the demand for services is soaring, necessitating a proactive approach to service provision.

While acknowledging the strain on existing resources and the challenges in accessing care, Dr Müller-Sedgwick stressed the importance of data-driven decision-making and the need for a national ADHD data improvement plan. He highlighted the critical role of psychiatrists in developing effective care pathways and training programs to meet the complex needs of individuals with ADHD, emphasizing the importance of investment in service expansion and workforce development.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is committed to collaborating with the NHS and Government to capitalize on this opportunity to enhance care for millions of individuals nationwide, with the potential to fundamentally reshape the landscape of ADHD care.