

READING SUB-TEST – TEXT BOOKLET: PART A

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ADHD

Text A

The GP's role in the management of ADHD

It helps to remind patients that ADHD is not all bad. ADHD is associated with positive attributes such as being more spontaneous and adventurous. Some studies have indicated that people with ADHD may be better equipped for lateral thinking. It has been suggested that explorers or entrepreneurs are more likely to have ADHD.

In addition, GPs can reinforce the importance of developing healthy sleep-wake behaviours, obtaining adequate exercise and good nutrition. These are the building blocks on which other treatment is based. For patients who are taking stimulant medication, it is helpful if the GP continues to monitor their blood pressure, given that stimulant medication may cause elevation. Once a patient has been stabilised on medication for ADHD, the psychiatrist may refer the patient back to the GP for ongoing prescribing in line with state-based guidelines. However, in most states and territories, the GP is not granted permission to alter the dose.

Text B

ADHD: Overview

Contrary to common belief, ADHD is not just a disorder of childhood. At least 40 to 50% of children with ADHD will continue to meet criteria in adulthood, with ADHD affecting about one in 20 adults. ADHD can be masked by many comorbid disorders that GPs are typically good at recognising such as depression, anxiety and substance use. In patients with underlying ADHD, the attentional, hyperactive or organisational problems pre-date the comorbid disorders and are not episodic as the comorbid disorders may be. GPs are encouraged to ask whether the complaints are of recent onset or longstanding. Collateral history can be helpful for developing a timeline of symptoms (e.g. parent or partner interview). Diagnosis of underlying ADHD in these patients will significantly improve their treatment outcomes, general health and quality of life.

TABLE 2. MEDICATIONS FOR ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER AND TYPICAL DOSING

Medication	Initiation	Dose
Immediate-release methylphenidate	5 to 10 mg in the morning the first day; add a second dose of 5 to 10 mg at lunch time for a week; then add further increments weekly	Total dose typically varies between 10 mg/day and 60 mg/day Doses of more than 80 mg/day are uncommon (maximum recommended dose in the NICE guidelines is 100 mg/day) ¹¹ Transition to longer-acting formulations can occur after a month
Extended-release methylphenidate	18 or 36 mg/day taken once daily in the morning	Increase in 18 mg increments to a maximum of 72 mg/day Adjust dosage at weekly intervals
Long-acting methylphenidate	20 mg/day taken once daily in the morning	Adjust dose weekly in 10 mg increments Dose usually would not exceed 60 mg/day
Dexamfetamine	2.5 to 5.0 mg in the morning the first day; add a second dose of 2.5 to 5.0 mg at lunch time for a week; then add further increments weekly	Total dose typically varies between 5 mg/day and 30 mg/day Doses over 40 mg/day are uncommon (maximum recommended dose in the NICE guidelines is 60 mg/day) ¹¹
Lisdexamfetamine	30 mg in the morning the first day; increase up to 70 mg according to response	Dose range typically 30 to 70 mg/day
Atomoxetine	For those weighing less than 70 kg, start at 0.5 mg/kg taken once daily for three days then increase to 1.2 mg/kg once daily in the morning or as evenly divided doses in the morning and late afternoon/early evening. For those weighing more than 70 kg, start at 40 mg/day taken once daily for three days then increase to target dose of 80 mg ³	Target dose 80 mg/day Maximum dose 100 mg ³

Text D

Treatment of ADHD

It is very important that the dosage of medication is individually optimised. An analogy may be made with getting the right pair of glasses – you need the right prescription for your particular presentation with not too much correction and not too little. The optimal dose typically requires careful titration by a psychiatrist with ADHD expertise. Multiple follow-up appointments are usually required to maximise the treatment outcome. It is essential that the benefits of treatment outweigh any negative effects. Common side effects of stimulant medication may include:

- appetite suppression
- insomnia
- palpitations and increased heart rate
- feelings of anxiety
- dry mouth and sweating