



Email: admin@aadpa.com.au
ABN: 85 616 076 049

www.aadpa.com.au

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MEDIA RELEASE

\$20 billion: the high cost of ADHD for Australia

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) affects more than 800,000 Australians. A new Deloitte Access Economics report, released today at the annual conference of the Australian ADHD Professionals Association in Brisbane, Australia, estimates that the social and economic impacts of the neurodevelopmental disorder are around \$20 billion per year.

Key findings from the report – **The Social and Economic Costs of ADHD in Australia** – produced for the Australian ADHD Professionals Association (AADPA) include:

- ADHD affects approximately 281,200 children and adolescents (0-19 years old) and 533,300 adults in Australia (20+ years old)
- The total financial cost of ADHD in Australia in 2019 was estimated to be \$12.83 billion, or \$15,700 per person living with the disorder
- People with ADHD also experience a substantial reduction in their quality of life, valued at an additional \$7.59 billion, or \$9,300 per person living with the disorder.

AADPA President, Professor Mark Bellgrove, said: “Characterised by symptoms of inattention, impulsivity, and in some cases excessive levels of hyperactivity, ADHD is known to most of us, but also misunderstood on multiple levels.

“While there is no single known cause, the syndrome arises from an interaction of genetic, social and environmental factors. Although it’s often a lifelong condition, early diagnosis and quality treatment improves individual outcomes significantly.

“Despite uncertainty around the causes of ADHD, it is clear that in Australia today, the social and economic cost of the condition is substantial. What we haven’t had, until now, is a report driven by high quality data that quantifies these impacts.

Having a better understanding of these costs can help efforts to reduce these social and financial burdens, on society, as well as on individuals and their families and communities.

Deloitte Access Economics Lead Partner, Health Economics and Social Policy, and the report’s principal author, Lynne Pezzullo, said: “At over \$20 billion in costs including lower productivity, health and education system costs, and reduced quality of life, the impact of ADHD is significant.”

“ADHD can impact an individual’s ability to function and engage in work or schooling and can mean they are less likely to be employed compared to their peers. The productivity losses for individuals and their families cost Australia more than \$10 billion in 2019. ADHD also affects the families of children living with the condition, and it is common for parents to report a change in responsibilities at work.”



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Professor Dave Coghill, AADPA Vice President and a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, said the new analysis would help inform a better understanding of the condition's impact and drive new research to help reduce the burden and lifelong impacts that ADHD can impose.

"Educating key stakeholders, from individuals and their families and workplaces, to policy makers across health, education and criminal justice systems is key," he said.

"We need new research across a range of sectors to deliver high quality interventions that reduce the impact of ADHD on families, their children, and adults living with ADHD. We certainly believe there are real opportunities for targeted policy interventions to help mitigate this costly condition on many fronts."