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# Hidden in plain sight: research and clinical update on **ADHD in girls & women**



**Conference Report**

# Overview

**Date:** Thursday, 27th March 2025, 9:30am-3pm

**Location:** University of Nottingham Jubilee Conference Centre

**Organiser:** Dr Blandine French, Dr Jessica Agnew-Blais, Michelle Becket

This event brought together 86 clinicians and researchers for an overview and update on ADHD in girls and women. The programme featured talks from a range of research, clinical, and lived-experience experts, as well as a priority-setting workshop focused on identifying key clinical and research needs in this area.

## Key themes

- **Clinical implications:** Speakers like Dr Lotta Borg Skoglund and Dr Andrew Harpham-Salter highlighted the need to adapt clinical practice to better support girls and women with ADHD, including consideration of hormonal influences and co-occurring conditions.
- **Research implications:** Presentations from Dr Joanna Martin and Dr Jessica Agnew-Blais addressed the development of gender-inclusive assessment tools and the impact of hormonal changes on symptom expression.
- **Lived experience perspectives:** Speakers from the ADHD community, including Michelle Beckett, spoke about the challenges of navigating ADHD without a diagnosis, the long journey to recognition, and the personal impact on education, work, and wellbeing.

# Research Priorities

*A summary of ranked research priorities to advance understanding and support for girls and women with ADHD.*

1. **Promoting early identification of ADHD in girls**, including factors influencing recognition and referral.
2. **Developing and validating inclusive assessment tools**, including digital and gender-sensitive measures.
3. **Understanding the role of co-occurring conditions and diagnostic overshadowing**, in delayed or missed ADHD diagnoses among females.
4. **Investigating ADHD medication use in women**, including effectiveness, side effects, and hormonal interactions.
5. **Exploring female ADHD within school environments**, including unmet needs, teacher perceptions and opportunities for improving identification and support.
6. **Evaluating non-pharmacological interventions for ADHD in females**, such as psychoeducation, behavioural strategies, and lifestyle modifications.
7. **Studying how hormonal changes influence ADHD symptoms and management**, across the menstrual cycle, perinatal period, and menopause.
8. **Mapping the trajectory of ADHD in females across the lifespan**, from childhood to later adulthood.
9. **Examining masking and compensation strategies**, particularly how they affect diagnosis, self-perception, and wellbeing.
10. **Investigating experiences of ADHD in women during the perinatal period and transition into parenthood**, including support needs and outcomes.

# Clinical Priorities

*A summary of ranked clinical priorities for improving ADHD care for girls and women.*

1. **Promoting earlier identification of ADHD in girls**, with a focus on improving recognition in childhood and adolescence.
2. **Reducing waiting times for assessment and improving timely access to support and treatment.**
3. **Improving the quality of diagnostic tools and outcome measures**, ensuring they are sensitive to gender-specific ADHD presentations.
4. **Recognising and addressing co-occurring conditions and diagnostic overshadowing**, particularly in complex clinical cases.
5. **Enhancing training and awareness for healthcare professionals and educators**, to improve identification and support in both clinical and school settings.
6. **Integrating hormonal changes into treatment planning**, including considerations around the menstrual cycle, perinatal period, and menopause.
7. **Delivering individualised treatment**, tailored to the unique needs and preferences of each woman or girl.
8. **Supporting emotional regulation and wellbeing**, including strategies to manage rejection sensitivity dysphoria.
9. **Expanding access to non-pharmacological interventions**, such as parenting programmes, psychoeducation, and lifestyle-based strategies.
10. **Strengthening collaboration with schools and teachers**, to support early identification, intervention, and consistent management strategies of ADHD in girls across home and school environments.

# Thank you



Thank you to everyone who joined us and contributed to the day's discussions and outcomes. Your input informed the priorities outlined in this report and added important perspectives to ongoing conversations about ADHD in girls and women.

For further updates or more information, please contact:

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