



As Dr Russell Barkley states in his application to the World Health Organization, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a serious psychiatric pathology that affects between 5 and 7% of children and 4 and 5% of adults around the world. The disorder has been well known and has been the subject of scientific study for more than a century.

It should be underlined that ADHD is one of the mental health disorders that has the most debilitating effects in key areas of the lives of sufferers. In infancy and adolescence it seriously disrupts educational performance, often causing academic failure. It also disrupts the functioning of the family, relationships with colleagues, community activities, not to mention the effect on the person's health. In adulthood, it has been shown to negatively affect areas like risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, accidents, imprudent driving, money mismanagement and, of course, in the field of work. It also has a significant impact on marriages and in bringing up children.

There is scientific evidence to show that ADHD is in the main caused by genetic factors, although it may also arise from prenatal lesions to the development of the brain and occasional to postnatal brain lesions. Environmental factors do not appear to play any important role in the ADHD initial etiology, although they do have a marled effect on its evolution, which is conditioned by high comorbidity with other mental and learning disorders, by the high degree of deterioration in key areas of the lives of sufferers and by accessibility to resources for proper diagnosis and treatment.

Of not too is that ADHD is one of the psychiatric pathologies that most lends itself to therapeutic treatment, with between 75 and 90% of sufferers responding positively to the treatments available, which include medication. Greater improvement can be achieved in the most important areas of their lives than for any other psychiatric condition.

Society needs to be aware that the serious difficulties and the disabling effects that people with ADHD have to confront are not due to the inexistence of effective treatments but to an insufficient awareness of this disorder, to the limitations and restrictions on access to specialist doctors and experts and to the variable availability of diagnosis and treatment services.

It is for all the above reasons that the Spanish Federation of Associations devoted to Helping Attention Deficiency and Hyperactivity (FEEAADAH), registered in Section 2 of the Spanish National Register of Associations, under number F-2296, and which groups together associations of ADHD sufferers and their families from all the Autonomous Regions of Spain, has decided to apply to the World Health Organization for the declaration of an annual **ADHD World Awareness Day**. FEEAADAH is therefore undertaking a campaign to gather support from individuals and institutions to sign the petition to the WHO for the said declaration.