

couriermail.com.au

enhanced by Google

Doubts over attention deficit disorder drug

- Font size: [Decrease](#) [Increase](#)
- Email article: [Email](#)
- Print article: [Print](#)
- Submit comment: [Submit comment](#)

Article from: 

Charles Miranda

November 13, 2007 12:00am

DRUGS used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder have no long-term effectiveness and could stunt children's growth.

And scientists have conceded test results that prompted the parental craze to dole out the drugs to their children may have been exaggerated.

In what is sure to generate debate, Britain's *Panorama* program has aired the results of an influential long-term monitoring program of 600 children across the US since the early 1990s.

The Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD concluded that while drugs such as Ritalin and Concerta worked in the short term, there was no demonstrable improvement in children's behaviour after three years of medication.

In Australia, the use of the prescription drugs has been treated by some as a panacea for disruptive behaviour by their children. The popularity of ADHD drugs doubled during the past few years and had caused medical authorities some concern.

Eight years ago, studies found one year of medication worked better than behavioural therapy in a finding that influences medical practice.

But the report's co-author from the University of Buffalo in the US, Professor William Pelham, said he now believed the findings were overstated.

"I think that we exaggerated the beneficial impact of medication in the first study," he said yesterday.

"We had thought that children medicated longer would have better outcomes. That didn't happen to be the case.

"The children had a substantial decrease in their rate of growth so they weren't growing as much as other kids both in terms of their height and in terms of their weight. And the second was that there were no beneficial effects - none.

"In the short run (medication) will help the child behave better, in the long run it won't. And that information should be made very clear to parents."

The influential BBC *Panorama* television program found last year that ADHD drugs had cost the public health system in Britain more than \$60 million.

The program aired disturbing footage of a 14-year-old Briton who had been on ADHD medication for a decade. His family kept a video diary of his behaviour and he had recently assaulted three school teachers.

Dr Tim Kendall, of the UK's Royal College of Psychiatrists, said: "A generous understanding would be to say that doctors have reached the point where they don't know what else to offer."

Professor Pelham believes behavioural therapy such as concentration tests in the first instance and a simple diet of omega-3 helped.

Share this article [What is this?](#)

- [Digg this](#)
- [Post to del.icio.us](#)
- [Post to Newsvine](#)

- Font size: [Decrease](#) [Increase](#)
- Email article: [Email](#)
- Print article: [Print](#)

Ads By Google

- [Information About ADHD](#)

Get a FREE information kit & trial voucher for a novel ADHD treatment

www.ADHD-Medicine.com

- [Adult ADD](#)

All Natural Herbal Remedy For The Symptoms of Adult ADD.

ADHD-Information.org

- **Natural ADD/ADHD Medicine**

Clinically Proven, No Side Effects, 1-Year Guarantee. 25% Discount Now!

www.NoMoreADD.com/Vaxa_Attend

© Queensland Newspapers. All times AEST (GMT + 10).