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Divorce Risk High in Parents of Children With ADHD

A new study says that parents whose children suffer from [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#) (ADHD) are more likely to divorce than people whose kids are perfectly normal.

[University at Buffalo](#) researchers have found that parents of a child with ADHD are nearly twice as likely to divorce by the time the child is 8 years old than parents of children without the condition.

"Certainly we are not suggesting that having a child with ADHD is the only reason these marriages end in divorce," William E. Pelham, Jr., Ph.D., professor of psychology and [pediatrics](#) at the University at Buffalo and senior author on the study.

"Disruptive child behaviour likely interacts over time with other existing stress in the family to spark conflict in a marriage and, ultimately, divorce," he added.

When parents interact with an ADHD child, they are more distressed, argue with one another more, and view one another as less supportive.

The study involving 282 adolescents and young adults who had been diagnosed with the disorder in childhood and their parents showed that that 22.7 percent of parents of children with ADHD had [divorced](#) by the time the child was 8 years old.

"Families that 'survive' through that age, perhaps because they are low on all of the risk factors, apparently will make it through the rest of the child's childhood," said Pelham.

Other most important factor that may contribute to risk of divorce included father's antisocial behaviour.

Moreover, the rate of divorce also increased when mothers had substantially less [education](#) than fathers along with children having serious oppositional-defiant disorder (ODD) and conduct disorder (CD).

The researchers said "those who treat children with ADHD and disruptive behaviour problems should take note if parents are having [marriage problems](#) and try to intervene to prevent the children from going through the trauma of divorce."

The study appears in the Journal of Consulting and [Clinical Psychology](#).

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