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New Zealand

05:10 AM

NZ expert confident of Ritalin drug

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A leading US scientist says there is no evidence that medicines provide a long term solution to Attention deficit hyper activity disorder (ADHD), however one expert here, argues the reporting's flawed.

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ADHD Treatment often includes drugs like Ritalin, or methylphenidate, a stimulant intended to lower impulsiveness and hyperactivity and boost attention. It also may include behavioural strategies to help children and their families manage the disorder.

A BBC documentary claims a leading American research project is losing faith in the drugs effectiveness over time.

Their study followed 600 American children and after one year, results showed Ritalin was beneficial.

But a second study claims the benefits disappear long-term.

Professor William Pelham says in the short term Ritalin will help children behave better, but long term it won't and that should be made clear to parents.

He says the drug also acts as an appetite suppressant, slowing children's growth.

Pelham believes behaviour therapy is a better tool for ADHD patients and that a combination of drugs and therapy is the best answer.

But experts in New Zealand say a third study, published by the same researchers tells a different story.

Professor John Werry says it shows over half of those same 600 children have maintained long term gains on Ritalin.

He says the long term benefits of drugs like Ritalin aren't the issue and what matters is treating the condition "here and now".

He agrees the drugs do curb growth, but by less than 5% and says with an obesity epidemic on the rise many would consider that a good thing.

Werry says what is clear is that children should have time off Ritalin and other similar drugs once a year to test whether they still need them.

Source: ONE News/Reuters

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