Tens of thousands of hyperactive children have been given drugs that have no positive long-term effects, the Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD reports. The newly published study followed 600 American children from the 1990s until recently.

The study shows that the behavior of children who took attention deficit hyperactivity disorder drugs like Ritalin and Concerta showed zero improvement.

“There were no beneficial effects—none,” the study’s co-author, William Pelham, said. “In the short run medication will help the child behave better, in the long run it won’t.”

Children on the methylphenidates (like Ritalin), which are prescription drugs that stimulate the central nervous system, were also found to have stunted growth, thanks to loss of appetite, one of the drug’s side effects.

Pelham admitted that the medical community was wrong about methylphenidates functioning as a miracle drug for hyperactive children.

“We published a report in 1999 that appeared to suggest that medication was the best way to treat children with ADHD,” he told the World Today radio program. “Other treatments were also good, that is a psychosocial approach, training parents and teachers how to work together, but medication appeared to be a big better, and we published that.”

After repeated follow-ups, Pelham and other researchers found the “beneficial” effects of the drugs decreasing to absolute zero.

“[E]ach time we did follow-up, the effects of medication were less and less. And this last follow-up, we can no longer detect any beneficial effects of medication” (ibid.).

Children who have unusually brief attention spans and are overactive are considered to have ADHD. However, the frequency with which doctors diagnose children with the disorder is also coming into question.

Responding to the American research, Baroness Susan Greenfield is calling on the British House of Lords to review the issue, telling the BBC, “As well as assessing the ADHD drugs themselves, we need to find out urgently why there has been such a remarkable increase in the numbers of children being diagnosed with ADHD in the last 20 years or so.”

Britain’s National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence says it advises the drugs be used only as part of a comprehensive treatment program that involves behavioral therapy and the child’s parents.
Doctors prescribed 55,000 British children with ADHD drugs in 2006. One of these children, Craig Buxton, 14, has been on methylphenidates for 10 years without his behavior improving.

His stepfather, Alan Hudson, expressed concern: “As he’s getting older, he’s getting much stronger, and who knows what he’s going to do.”

The BBC reports that most of the estimated 500,000 British children with ADHD receive no treatment at all.

That may not be such a bad thing after all.

Here’s a clue: Leaving parents at the bottom of the list in a “comprehensive treatment program” is one of the “experts’” most critical mistakes. Chemical combinations cannot replace or even enhance parenting. However, tens of thousands of families are turning to drugs out of desperation, and many of those families themselves are fractured or broken.

As educator Herbert W. Armstrong described it, scientific human reasoning has become contemporary society’s latest “Messiah,” regarded as the scientific savior for every social, moral and societal problem. However, evidence is piling up that even the most advanced and complex combinations of chemical, physical, physiological, psychiatric, pharmacological or psychosocial research cannot train the human mind or build human character.

This is because, contrary to evolution-based hypotheses, the human mind is not simply an organic collection of tissue and chemicals. To learn much more about the human mind and how your children can grow to become physically, socially and mentally healthy and happy, read What Science Can’t Discover About the Human Mind. •