

# The AD/HD Family Support Group

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## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is still a diagnosis which raises many questions. Is it a bona fide diagnosis or not?

Its history can be traced back to 1916 in research carried out by Dr. Arthur Still on asthmatic children. Today it is known that there are three sub-types of AD/HD and researchers such as Prof. Russell Barkley (University of Massachusetts, USA) and Dr. Sam Goldstein (University of Massachusetts, USA) say that it is not primarily a problem of attention, but more a problem of developmental delay in the area of self-regulation. People with AD/HD know what they should do but they fail to do it.

It may be easy to brush off the symptoms as individually occurring problems, but when they prevent the normal development and acceptance of the child by his peers, they become as important as any other health-related problem.

The AD/HD Family Support Group has an extensive Resource Library covering all aspects of AD/HD. The literature is suitable for members of all the involved professions, parents, children with AD/HD as well as their siblings. Besides books, audio tapes and video tapes are also available and many information leaflets are provided free of charge.

Past activities of the Group include the organisation of visits to Malta by psychiatrist Dr. Veira Bailey (Maudsley Hospital, University of London) and Dr. Dianne Zaccheo, who runs a Family Clinic in London, and most recently a Seminar by Dr. Loretta Giorcelli, from Australia who is a consultant specialist in the disability and inclusion field in schools across Eastern Asia, America and England.

The Group also organises In-Service Training courses for schools and delivers talks at various venues, including the University of Malta and Parent-Teacher Association meetings. At the request of member parents, we also offer to communicate with the teachers of their AD/HD-affected child.

The Support Group disseminates information regarding the latest research and new medication to members and acts as a pressure Group in any area considered to be of importance to families and sufferers of AD/HD.

The Group meets regularly on the second Friday of every month at the premises in Msida, at 6.30 p.m. These meetings help group members realise that they are not alone and the moral support they give each other is of the utmost benefit. The meetings are open to all interested individuals, and not only to parents. Children with AD/HD have their meeting with a Personal and Social Development teacher who organises games and activities to help them consolidate the skills where they are having problems. A new addition to our Group meetings is a siblings' group; this also meets at the same time on the same day.

Parents suffer twice from this disability, once because of having a child with a disability and secondly because of the lack of awareness and appreciation of the condition, its manifestation and handling.

The address of the Support Group is: Paulmar, Oscar Zammit Street, Msida. The telephone (+356 2123 3749) is serviced by an answering machine and any messages are dealt with as promptly as possible. The office is open to visitors and the library may be used on Friday mornings between 10.00am and 12.30pm. However, if necessary, alternative arrangements for library viewing can be made by prior telephone arrangement.



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