



## **South African Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (SA-ACAPAP) Statement on the Use of Rating Scales in the diagnosis of ADHD in Children and Adolescents.**

The South African Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (SA-ACAPAP) is a multi-professional association of individuals and organisations committed to the elevation of the understanding, practice and awareness of mental health issues for all children and adolescents in South Africa and throughout the world.

SA-ACAPAP acknowledges attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), in its various guises, as being a frequently arising condition in children and adolescents. It emphasises that its diagnosis and management should ideally be undertaken in a multi-professional manner. SAACAPAP strongly recommends the adherence to the considered and published South African guidelines<sup>1</sup>, as well as the awareness of and adherence to international guidelines<sup>2,3</sup>.

The evaluation of any child or adolescent with problems suspected to be in keeping with ADHD, or any other condition with manifestations similar to those of ADHD, centres around a thorough clinical evaluation by an appropriately qualified healthcare professional. The Association unequivocally holds that the diagnosis is made on clinical grounds, in accordance with internationally accepted diagnostic criteria<sup>4,5</sup>, while considering the input from the child's parent/s and/or caregivers. The evaluation of a child or adolescent may be supported by the input of occupational, speech and language, teachers' reports and psycho-educational assessments; as well as the circumspect use of appropriately validated rating scales. The diagnosis is never made entirely from the findings of a rating scale. In this respect SA-ACAPAP endorses the Position Statement of the South African Society of Psychiatrists Child and Adolescent Special Interest Group on the use of rating scales in the diagnosis of ADHD in children and adolescents<sup>6</sup> in its entirety. SA-ACAPAP continues to strive for ethical, equitable and accessible mental health care for all the country's children and adolescents based in best clinical, and evidence-based practice.

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(SA-ACAPAP President 2016 – 2019)

1. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children and adolescents A J Flisher, S Hawkridge, in: South African Journal of Psychiatry, August 2013 Vol. 19 No. 3, pp136 -140.
2. CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE ADHD: Clinical Practice Guideline for the Diagnosis, Evaluation, and Treatment of Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents, American Academy of Paediatrics, 2011.
3. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management, Clinical guideline Published: 24 September 2008 nice.org.uk/guidance/cg72
4. American Psychiatric Association: American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association, 2013. Section II, pp 59 - 66
5. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. (1992). The ICD-10 classification of mental and behavioural disorders: clinical descriptions and diagnostic guidelines. Geneva, World Health Organization.
6. Diagnosis of ADHD in Children and Adults February 2018  
[https://www.sasop.co.za/Statements/ADHD\\_Diagnosis](https://www.sasop.co.za/Statements/ADHD_Diagnosis)