

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/neurofrontiers/diagnosing-adult-adhd-in-the-social-media-era/57155/>

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Diagnosing Adult ADHD in the Social Media Era

Announcer:

Welcome to *NeuroFrontiers* on ReachMD. Today, Dr. Jill RachBeisel will discuss the influence of social media on adult ADHD assessment. Dr. RachBeisel is the Dr. Irving J. Taylor Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Let's hear from her now.

Dr. RachBeisel:

ADHD has become very popular. You will hear people say, "Oh, I'm ADDing today," when they don't have ADHD. We live in a kind of pill-popping, make-me-better-fast-and-easy society, where, if you can gain a diagnosis of ADHD and get a pill to make you function better, then life is easy and you don't have to work very hard. And so, for some individuals that hear this, they see that as a reason why they're not succeeding in life, and they're looking for a diagnosis of ADHD.

One of the things that comes up is using self-symptom report tools to identify people with adult ADHD. And I would argue those are not very reliable because of the influence of social media. And people are informed. That's a good thing. People know what the symptoms are, and so they want to report them so that they can get treatment that they think is going to make them successful and do better in life, even if they don't have ADHD.

So it's up to the clinician to be very meticulous in doing a full assessment without the use of self-reporting tools—which, I would argue, are not reliable—and really help someone work through what's going on with them individually, not so much what social media tells them. I usually approach it by encouraging the individual to focus on themselves. We read a lot, and we resort to the internet to get information. And the problem with the internet is that it's general information, and we are individual people. So I hear them very carefully, listen to them very seriously, and then pivot the discussion away from what they've heard, and focus more on thinking about you, what you experience, or what you see as interfering—if it is—with your life. So I really go through with an individual the process of understanding what it is that they grapple with, and what kinds of outcomes they're seeing in themselves that make them worried and make them think that they're connected to this thing that they hear on social media. But I really try to disconnect that and just focus on them as an individual person, highlighting that every brain is different. We are all unique individuals, so let's understand it from their perspective.

Announcer:

You just heard Dr. Jill RachBeisel talking about how to navigate ADHD diagnoses in the social media era. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *NeuroFrontiers* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!