
PALS NEWSLETTER

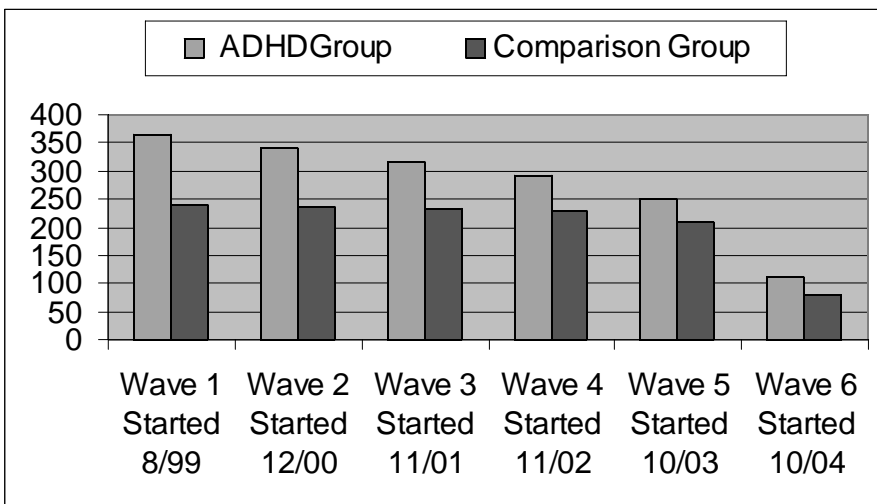
A newsletter of the Pittsburgh ADHD Longitudinal Study

STUDY UPDATE

As you may remember, we formally changed the way that we refer to the study to the **PALS Study**—for the Pittsburgh ADHD Longitudinal Study to reflect the way that the study is being referred to in the scientific community. The size and scope of our study has generated considerable interest among ADHD researchers. Drs. Pelham and Molina have been asked to present preliminary study findings this summer at two international meetings.

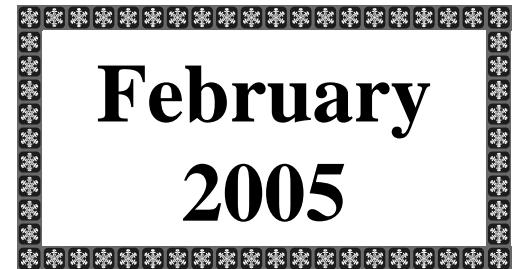
Visits Completed to Date

The chart below provides an overview of the interviews that have been completed to date at each wave, for both the ADHD group and the Comparison group. We continue to see high participation rates across both groups, and across waves, which strengthens the results of our study. Thanks to each of you for helping to make this possible.



Wave 6 Begins

In October, 2004, we started our sixth annual round of interviews. Letters have gone out to everyone whose Wave 5 visit was prior to May, 2004. We send letters 9 months after your previous year's interview, allowing a couple of months for scheduling. From a data perspective, it is helpful to interview participants at the same time each year and also to interview all of the participants in one family as close together in time as possible.



The Wave 6 interviews are going well—we find that most participants are completing their interviews in less than three hours. The only exception to this are the 17 and 18 year old visits—for both the teenager and the parent. As you may recall, these are longest because we add adult versions of the questionnaires to the interview at these ages.

PARKING IN OAKLAND

The city's increased parking tax has significantly increased the cost of parking for participants in Oakland. As a reminder, we will reimburse you for the actual cost of parking. This amount will be added to your participant payment check. Meters are free on Sundays.

**Remembering Our
Participants in the Armed
Services**

A number of our study participants are serving in the armed services, stationed in the US and abroad. All of the members of the **PALS** staff would like to send out our very best wishes to these brave young men and women. We are rooting for you and your safe return home!

CHADD Website Provides Helpful Materials for Adults with ADHD

Nathan Tatro, PALS Interviewer

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder does not exist. School-aged children diagnosed with ADHD “outgrow” the disorder by the time they reach adulthood. College students who struggle with symptoms of ADHD must simply “deal with it” because there are no academic resources available to them. These are just a few myths concerning ADHD that the C.H.A.D.D. (Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) website seeks to debunk.

CHADD is a national, non-profit organization. Founded in 1987, CHADD was first organized by concerned parents and psychologists in order to counter the public’s misconception that ADHD was an untreatable condition that could be attributed to an individual’s “behavior problems.” Today, CHADD is dedicated to educating the general public concerning the realities of how ADHD affects individuals and their families.

Of particular interest are their Information and Resource Sheets for Adults with ADHD. These are available at the CHADD website address.

The topics that are covered include:

- Time Management: Learning to Use a Day Planner
- A Guide to Organizing the Home and Office
- College Issues for Students with ADHD
- Legal Issues for Adults with ADHD in the Workplace and Higher Education
- Social Skills in Adults with ADHD
- Guidelines for Succeeding in the Workplace with ADHD
- Money Management for Adults with ADHD
- Coaching and ADHD in Adults
- ADHD in Women
- Medication Management for Adults with ADHD

The Information and Resource Sheets include various strategies that we all can use—**whether we have ADHD or not**—when striving to manage the hustle-and-bustle of daily living. A sample of the information that is provided includes:

Organization and Time Management

For individuals who have difficulty with effectively planning, outlining, scheduling and remembering daily tasks, this section of the web site provides specific guidelines that we can use in order to assemble an organized, personal day planner. The authors encourage those who have tried using a daily planner in the past to give it another shot and provide useful tips on how to be successful at it (<http://www.help4adhd.org/en/living/organdtime>).

Legal Issues for College Students and Adult Professionals with ADHD

Is a diagnosis of ADHD enough to be eligible for unique legal and educational services? Are public institutions of higher learning required to provide academic assistance to its students who are diagnosed with ADHD?

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**CHADD'S Chapter #477 Adults with
ADD/ADHD**

**Pittsburgh & Tri-State Area Upcoming
Meetings**

Thursday, February 24, 2005

**Oscar Bukstein, M.D., Medical Director
ADD Research Program**

"The Dangers & Concerns of Self Medicating, Over-Medicating, Increasing Tolerance, Dependency & Substance Alcohol Abuse in Adults with ADD/ADHD Pharmaceutical Treatment."

Thursday, May 26, 2005

**Brooke Molina, Ph.D., Director,
ADD Research Program**

"The Pittsburgh ADHD Longitudinal Study: Adulthood Outcomes for 300+ Children with ADHD, Now ranging in age from 18 to 30."

Regular Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Room 292, 3811 O'Hara St. at DeSoto St. in Oakland (7:00 to 9:30 pm). For additional information or for a complete listing of 2005 meetings, contact Leslie Stone at 412-682-6282 or slesliestone@aol.com.

Should you inform a potential employer about your diagnosis when applying for a job? The answer to these questions and more are provided at the CHADD web site

(<http://www.help4adhd.org/en/systems/legal/legalissues>).

**Money Management for Adults with
ADHD**

Clarifying your financial goals, becoming more aware of how you spend your money, curbing your impulsive spending and reliance on your credit card are all covered under this topic. Although the authors concede that there is no published research on exactly how adults with ADHD manage their finances (although we at **PALS** are collecting this data from you!), they provide a helpful blueprint that we can follow to manage our resources responsibly and effectively

(<http://www.help4adhd.org/en/living/moneymgmt>).

We will make copies of each of the resource sheets for any interested **PALS** participants. You can request these over the phone by calling 412-246-5656 (Joanne Bethune) or by asking for them when you arrive for your yearly visit.

Happy reading!



Important Study Phone Numbers

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Joanne Bethune

Administrative Assistant
(412) 246-5656

Tracey Wilson

Program Coordinator
(412) 246-5673

If you need to change or to cancel your study appointment, please call (412) 246-5656. The answering machine is checked seven days week.

ADHD MEDICATIONS IN THE NEWS

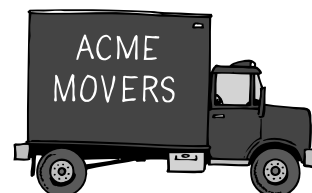


In recent weeks, there have been two major news stories concerning medications commonly used in the treatment of ADHD. We have discussed these stories with Dr. William Pelham and Dr. Oscar Bukstein. Dr. Pelham is an Investigator of the **PALS** Study and the former director of the ADHD Program at WPIC. Dr. Pelham is now a professor of Psychology and Pediatrics at the SUNY at Buffalo where he oversees the **PALS** data center. Dr. Bukstein is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh and the Medical Director of our ADHD Research Program.

In late January, the *Wall Street Journal* printed an article that was reprinted by the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* reporting a recent study that proposes a possible link between long-term Ritalin use and depression. The article goes on to suggest that this problem is compounded by children being frequently misdiagnosed as having ADHD. Dr. Bukstein co-authored a letter to the editor of the *Post Gazette*, printed on February 15, 2005 to voice his concerns about the article. He found the story misleading, particularly because the study was conducted with rats, not humans and also because it suggests the use of a computerized test as a way of improving accuracy for diagnosing ADHD. Dr. Pelham adds that the long-term effects of stimulant medication have indeed been under studied, and that the **PALS** study will be one of the first to date to address this issue. Further, while there are many studies showing the short-term beneficial effects of medication such as Ritalin, the limited studies that have been conducted in humans do not show long term effects that are either positive OR negative. While the study discussed in the article found potentially harmful effects in rats, these have not been replicated in any human studies. With regard to appropriate diagnostic procedures, both Drs. Pelham and Bukstein support the importance of a comprehensive assessment that gathers information from a variety of sources and evaluates functioning at home, at school (or work), and with peers. From a clinical standpoint, Dr. Pelham stresses that it is more critical to know to what degree and in what settings children are experiencing problems in daily life functioning, than whether they meet a particular diagnostic category. In a related way, this is a reason that we have used multiple reporting methods in the **PALS** study—gathering outcome information from the adolescent or young adult, parents, and if possible, teachers—provides a much more accurate and complete picture of functioning.

In the second week of February, the Canadian government suspended the use of Adderall®, a medication that is frequently used in the treatment of ADHD. Both Drs. Pelham and Bukstein contributed to a February 12th *New York Times* article about this decision, and about the use of Adderall® and other stimulant medication. The Canadian government's decision was in response to episodes of sudden death associated with the use of the drug. Approximately 20 cases of sudden death have been reported world-wide since Adderall® and Adderall XR were first introduced. Almost all of these cases were associated with abuse or structural cardiac abnormalities. The US Food and Drug Administration reviewed these cases and determined that there was inadequate evidence of a causal relationship between therapeutic Adderall® use and sudden death. Since September, 2004, there have been added warnings about the use of Adderall® with patients—children and adults—having drug abuse or heart problems. Drs. Pelham and Bukstein agree with this approach and suggest that physicians ask patients about a history of these problems before prescribing Adderall®.

If you have moved, plan on moving or changed your telephone number, please contact Joanne at (412) 246-5656 to provide us with updated information.



UNITED STATES PRESIDENTS

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FIND THE HIDDEN WORDS.....

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