



# PALS NEWSLETTER

A newsletter of the Pittsburgh ADHD Longitudinal Study

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February 2008

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## OVER 10,000 VISITS COMPLETED!

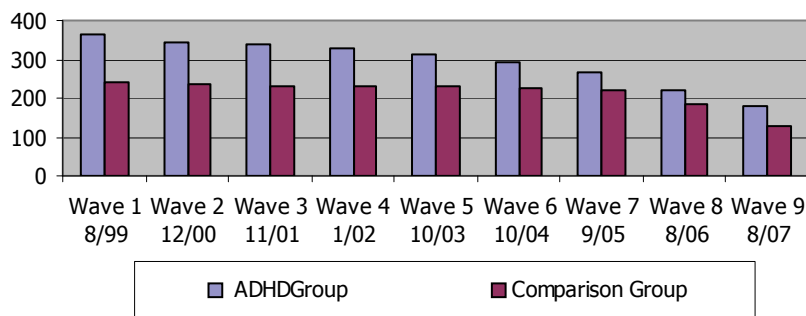
The PALS study has reached an important milestone: **10,220 visits have been completed since the study began in August, 1999!** Thanks to all of you for continuing with the study these many years. More than 95% of our original 604 families continue to participate in the project—something that we are all

extremely proud of, and that earned recognition during the review of our most recent grant application. Our ninth annual assessments are continuing. To date, **more than 310 young adults and 320 parents** have completed their ninth assessment.

Letters are now going out to everyone whose last visit was before **April, 2007**. The length of visit and payments are the same for everyone except young adults who are now between the ages of 29 and 31. We have added a structured interview for these folks, making their yearly interview last about **five hours** or less, and they will be paid

\$200. If you have received a letter, and know when you would like to come in, please call us at 412-246-5656. The table details the number of visits participants have completed at each wave.

Young Adult Visits Completed to Date



## New Payment Cards for PALS Study

Beginning in January 2008, study participants will no longer be paid by check. Through a system called We-Pay, you will now receive a plastic debit cards that our staff load with the amount of your study payment. We will issue a PIN number that you use to cash or to use the card.



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## New Payment Cards for PALS Study

*Continued from Page 1*



### **We-Pay cards are flexible!**

- ◆ You can use the card to withdraw cash at ATMs:
  - Citizen's Bank ATM: the first withdrawal is free, a fee will be charged for additional withdrawals.
  - MasterCard, Maestro or Cirrus ATMs: will accept the card, but may charge a fee for each withdrawal. You should be notified of any fees at the time of the withdrawal and the fee will be deducted from the amount on your card.
- ◆ You can use the card anywhere MasterCard debit cards are accepted (Giant Eagle, CVS, Rite-Aid, other retail stores). You will need to keep track of your balance. You may access your balance by logging on to the following web site or using the toll free telephone number listed:
 

**For balance: [www.cashlynkmc.com](http://www.cashlynkmc.com) or 1-800-591-1110**  
**You will need your PIN to receive your balance.**
- ◆ You may get cash from your We-Pay card from a teller at either of the Citizens Bank offices in Oakland:
  - 3718 Fifth Avenue (at Oakland Avenue)
  - 4570 Fifth Avenue (at Craig Street)

### **We-Pay cards work for out of towners, too!**

We will mail cards to those of you who do not complete your visit at our office. These cards will not be activated until you call us. As soon as you receive your card, call the PALS study line and we will load the card with money. In most cases, you will be able to access your money within 24 hours of calling us.

Any questions, or if you forget your PIN, call the PALS study line at (412) 246-5656.

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## Pittsburgh Celebrates 250 years!

The City of Pittsburgh is celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the naming of our region, thanks to the Forbes campaign of 1758 that built the first road over the Allegheny Mountains and led to the establishment of Forts Bedford, Ligonier and Pitt.



In 1908, Pittsburgh celebrated the 150th anniversary of its naming by throwing parades, replacing gas-lit lamps with electric models and laying the cornerstone of Oakland's Soldiers & Sailors National Military Museum & Memorial.

Fifty years later, buoyed by the bright-eyed optimism of a budding nuclear age, Pittsburgh hailed technology, cleared the Golden Triangle for Point State Park and built what now is known as Mellon Arena.

In 2008 -- The city will celebrate its 250th anniversary throughout the year. Pittsburgh will be offering up special events commemorating its 250-year history, including theatrical and balletic performances, sporting events, the Pittsburgh Biennial and Carnegie International arts fairs, and more. For more information about the region's celebration events, please visit [www.imaginepittsburgh.com](http://www.imaginepittsburgh.com).

## STUDY FINDINGS: Treatments for Adults with ADHD



For over 50 years, researchers have investigated treatments for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In fact, many of these studies, including the largest federally-funded study ever conducted with children (sp. MTA), were undertaken at the University of Pittsburgh. While much progress has been made towards identifying effective interventions for ADHD (e.g., behavioral parenting strategies, stimulant medication), much remains to be learned about how to optimally treat youth with ADHD across home and school settings. Interestingly, even though we now know that many children continue to have symptoms of ADHD into adulthood, there are very few studies on the treatment of ADHD in adulthood compared to many studies of treatment for children. This article summarizes what we currently know from the research literature about the treatment of ADHD in adulthood.

### Medication

Similar to research with children, stimulant medication has a relatively longstanding history of effectiveness as a treatment for adults with ADHD. Results of 20 studies suggest that short-acting Ritalin (methylphenidate) and, more recently, long-acting Concerta (methylphenidate HCL) and Adderall XR (mixed amphetamine salts) successfully reduce symptoms of ADHD in adults. However, the available studies also indicate that *adults with ADHD respond more inconsistently to stimulant medication than do children*. Further, no study has examined factors that predict which adults will respond positively or negatively to stimulants and only one study has examined effects of stimulants for longer than 6 months. Thus, important questions remain unanswered regarding the effectiveness of stimulant medication as a first line medication treatment for adults with ADHD.

Non-stimulant medication trials have also been conducted with adults with ADHD. The most common non-stimulant medication, and the only

FDA approved drug to treat ADHD in adulthood, is Strattera (atomoxetine). Seven studies have investigated Strattera, with results indicating that it reduces ADHD symptoms in adults and also has some positive effects for depression and anxiety. Another non-stimulant prescribed to manage symptoms of ADHD in adulthood is Wellbutrin (bupropion). However, only a handful of studies have assessed how effective Wellbutrin is with adults with ADHD, and only one of these had stringent criteria in place to evaluate its usefulness. Furthermore, the positive effects of Strattera and Wellbutrin for adults with ADHD are often *smaller* than the benefits experienced by adults treated with stimulants. With this in mind, non-stimulant medications are often recommended *after* trials with stimulants fail to yield significant effects for adults with ADHD.

In sum, there is some evidence available in support of stimulants as a first-line medication and non-stimulants as a second-line medication for adults with ADHD. Yet, *neither form of medication has been shown to consistently and/or sufficiently treat adults with ADHD*. Alternative and/or complimentary interventions appear to be needed.

### Psychotherapy

About ten years ago, the *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* highlighted the potential usefulness of combining medication and psychotherapy treatments for adults with ADHD. Since their recommendation, research has finally started to test whether adults with ADHD indeed benefit from psychotherapy. The most commonly used and rigorously tested psychotherapy for ADHD in adulthood is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT).

Briefly, CBT is based on the notion that thoughts, emotions, and behavior are all interconnected. By focusing treatment on “challenging” distressing thoughts (e.g., “Nothing

ever goes my way.”) with alternative thoughts (e.g., “I did have some good things happen yesterday.”), studies have found that CBT helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. CBT for ADHD has a similar focus: challenging negative thoughts (e.g., “I’m never going to be able to get this done.”) with alternative, positively framed thoughts (e.g., “I’ve been able to get things on time before, why not this?”). CBT for ADHD also typically teaches effective coping skills to reduce disorganization, poor planning, distractibility, procrastination, and avoidance of difficult tasks.

While research has found consistently that CBT is *ineffective* in treating the symptoms of ADHD in childhood, recent work highlights that *CBT may be an effective intervention for ADHD in adulthood*. Eight studies, including 3 with stringent criteria, evaluated whether adults medicated for ADHD did better when they also received CBT. Findings indicated that adults with ADHD felt better when they were treated with medication *and* CBT than those who received medication-only treatment. However, these studies only revealed improvements in ADHD symptoms (e.g., are you often easily distracted, do you often act before thinking) in medicated adults. *No study has examined whether CBT helps unmedicated adults with ADHD or whether the daily life functioning of adults with ADHD (e.g., marital relations, work performance) improves with CBT*. While results of these studies are encouraging, work is needed to clarify how well CBT really works, and whether other creative ways of helping adults with ADHD may be helpful (e.g., coaching).

### Conclusion

Adults with ADHD have been shown to benefit most from treatment including stimulant medication *and* CBT. However, additional research is sorely needed before anyone can confidently recommend the *best* way for clinicians and consumers to manage adult ADHD.

Brian Wymbs

Clinical Psychology Intern  
University of Pittsburgh



### Sudoku Classic

*Sudoku* is the Japanese word combining "number" and "single". Its origin stems from an 18th century game by a Swiss mathematician. His game was named "Latin Squares". This is truly an international game.

	2	5	9		1		4	6
	6	3	7	4	2			
9					4	3		
	7							9
5			8		4			1
6							7	
		2						8
			2	9	8	5	3	
4	9		3		6	1	2	

**GAMEPLAY** The object of the game is to fill all the blank squares with the correct numbers. Several of the 9 x 9 grid squares already contain numbers -- you cannot change these. To work the puzzle, fill in the empty squares of the grid with the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The puzzle is solved when each **ROW** and each **COLUMN**, and each **3 x 3** square within the puzzle contain the numerals 1 through 9 with each numeral appearing only once. **Good Luck!**



**If you need to change or cancel your study appointment, please call the PALS scheduling line at 412-246-5656.**

### Don't forget to check our program website!



Visit us at [www.youthandfamilyresearch.com](http://www.youthandfamilyresearch.com)

Not only can you find information about the Youth and Family Research Program and our Staff, you can:

- Get directions to our office and information on parking
- Contact a Youth and Family Research Program staff member
- Find information about community resources
- Find out about **new** research projects that are currently accepting participants



**Oakland drivers  
be aware:  
Boulevard of the Allies  
construction causes  
major road closure**

**Who is affected?**

All traffic traveling eastbound toward Oakland on the Boulevard of the Allies and Parkway East (I-376) Traffic on the Boulevard from Oakland to Downtown will be detoured around the construction site.

**Where?**

From the eastbound Parkway East ramp to McDevitt Place (near the Hampton Inn and Pittsburgh Playhouse)

**How long?**

Beginning Jan. 3 and lasting through November

**Why?**

Bridge replacement on the Boulevard of the Allies

**What do I do?**

Visit [www.upmc.com](http://www.upmc.com) for complete details on the project, detours to Oakland hospitals, parking lots and news articles. Click on the Boulevard of the Allies link.



Adults with ADD for Pittsburgh  
& Tri State Area  
CHADD International Chapter #477  
Upcoming Meetings

**February 28, 2008**  
'Speaker & Topic to be Announced'

**March 27, 2008**  
'Thinking through Decisions'  
Cathy Schuster, LCSW,  
Individual & Family Therapist

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  
from 7:00 to 9:30 pm.

For additional information or for a complete listing of 2008 meetings, contact Leslie Stone, Chapter Coordinator at 412-682-6282 or please visit [www.pittsburghadd.org](http://www.pittsburghadd.org).

**Pittsburgh named top  
travel destination for  
2008!**



*Reprinted with permission  
By The Tribune-Review  
Tuesday, December 11, 2007*

Not only is Pittsburgh America's "most livable" city, it was recognized as a top travel destination.

Frommer's, one of the world's most popular travel Web sites and line of travel guidebooks, included the Steel City in its 2008 edition of the annual list, citing the city's cultural offerings and events planned for the city's 250th anniversary.

Toting attractions like the Carnegie Natural History Museum and The Andy Warhol Museum, Frommer's editorial staff wrote the city "retains its past glory in its universities, ethnic neighborhoods, and supremely engineered and iconic bridges that span the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers criss-crossing the city."

Thirteen cities around the world were included on the list. For a complete listing, please visit [www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com)

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



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