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**THE ADHD CLUSTER: COMPARING APLES WITH ELEPHANTS?**

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**Aim:** To study the differential psychopathology of ADHD according to the Conners and ICD/DSM criteria

**Method:** Studying hyperactivity, attention and impulsivity features in children in relation to sensory processing difficulties, specific cognitive impairment and anxiety.

An extensive developmental questionnaire and old notes are also used to detect cognitive style, rate of development, communication and learning needs

**Preliminary results:** 86/136 63% (208-209) children with a learning disability are assessed according to the Conners rating scale. An additional 21 are assessed for attention deficit without the use of the Conners. 27/86 meet the criteria of an attention deficit syndrome according to the Conners. 6/21 are meeting the criteria of ADHD according to international diagnostic criteria (total 33 cases). 13/33 cases display ADHD features of response inhibition and general utilisation behavior. 5 with a hyperactivity syndrome respond to sensory material such as a bean bag, a slow rhythmic voice and a squiggly cushion. 18 cases have no attentional difficulties on preferred activities. Four attentional cases resolve with tailored educational input. One case of 'typical ADHD' recovers at resolution of abuse. 9 display ADHD features as a form of communicating distress. Of the twenty cases 17 are meeting the criteria of an autistic spectrum disorder.

**Conclusion:** This study needs expanding, under experimental conditions and with multiple researchers to optimize blinding. However, this unfinished pilot demonstrates that ADHD criteria do not cater for qualitative differences in presentation and etiology. This has very serious treatment and ethical implications.