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THE PREVALENCE OF ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY SYMPTOMS IN SCHOOL CHILDREN: A HIGHLY CONSANGUINEOUS COMMUNITY

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Objective: The objective of the present study was to find the prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity (ADH) symptoms in a highly consanguineous community.

Design: A cross sectional study was conducted during October 2006 - January 2007.

Subjects and methods: A total of 2500 primary school students, aged 6-12 years were randomly selected from the government primary schools and 1869 students (74.8%) gave consent to participate in this study.

Results: Of the students surveyed, 50.7% were boys and 49.3% girls. The data revealed that 158 boys [16.7%; 95%CI (14.4-19.2)] and 50 girls [5.4%;95%CI (4.1-7.1)] scored above the cut-off (≥ 15) for ADH symptoms, thus giving an overall prevalence of [11.1%; 95%CI (9.7-12.6)]. The Children who had higher score for ADH symptoms were in the age group 6-9 years. Children who had higher score for ADH symptoms had school performance poorer than those with lower scores ($P=0.002$). 200 children (96.2%) with ADH were disobedient, 60.6% noisy and hyperactive, 36.5% very cranky, 37.5% troublesome and 37.9% nervous. The logistic regression identified in our study that socio-economic condition, number of children, school performance and poor relationship between parents were the main contributors for ADH. This shows that the consanguinity has no impact on ADH children.

Conclusion: The study revealed that ADH symptoms are found to be a common problem among the school children in Qatar. A significant difference was found between children with and without ADHD for their behaviour.