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Lazarus, Kim Jayde

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The Knowledge and Perceptions of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder held by Foundation Phase Educators in a Township in Gauteng

Kim Jayde Lazarus

Supervisor: Dr Zaytoon Amod

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2011.

Declaration

"I declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university"

K.J. LAZARUS DATE: 30 October 2012

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Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a very common disorder that affects 8% to 10% of South African children. It is thus prevalent in the classroom, and with the advent of inclusive education in South Africa, educators have to facilitate and support the needs of learners with ADHD. Educators play an integral role and provide essential information with regards to the identification, diagnosis and referral of ADHD. It is the responsibility of the educator to create an environment where every learner has the opportunity to succeed. However, uncertainty exists as to whether South African educators have an appropriate and adequate understanding of the disorder. This study therefore aimed to examine the knowledge and perceptions of ADHD held by foundation phase educators in a township in Gauteng. A sample of 100 female educators was used in the study and a mixed methods approach using a questionnaire was administered to the educators. Their knowledge and perceptions in the three content areas of ADHD (Associated Features, Symptoms/Diagnosis and Treatment) was explored. Data analysis reflected that the educators in the sample had inadequate and insufficient knowledge and understandings of ADHD. Educators seemed to know the most about the symptoms of the condition, less about the associated features and the least about treatment approaches. The implications of these research findings are discussed, within the South African context.

Key Words: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, foundation phase educators, lack of knowledge and perceptions of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, educator training

TABLE OF CONTENTS **Page**

Title **i**

Declaration **ii**

Acknowledgements **iii**

Abstract **iv**

CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) 2

1.3 Definitions of the terms 'Knowledge and Perception' 3

1.4 Contemporary Views and Etiologies 4

1.5 Core Symptoms of ADHD 6

1.5.1 Introduction 6

1.5.2 Predominantly Inattentive Type (ADHD I) 7

1.5.3 Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive Type (ADHD H) 7

1.6 Assessment and Diagnosis of ADHD 8

1.7 Interventions 9

1.8 Knowledge and Perceptions of the educator regarding ADHD 14

CHAPTER TWO: Research Methodology

2.1 Research Aims and Research Questions 20

2.2 Research Design 20

2.3 Sampling 21

Target Population 21

Sample 21

2.4 Instruments 21

2.5 Method of Analysis 24

2.6 Ethical Considerations 25-26

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

Introduction 27

3.1. Description of respondents 27

3.1.1 Age of respondents 27

3.1.2 Education levels of respondents 27

3.1.3 Respondent familiarity with ADHD 27

3.1.4 Confidence to teach children with ADHD 28

3.1.5 ADHD education and training 28

3.1.6 ADHD evaluations and diagnosis 30

3.2 Psychometric properties of the scales 31

3.2.1 Scale and subscale distributions 32

3.2.2 Scale statistics and psychometric properties 32

3.3 Research Question 1

3.3.1 Associated Features of ADHD 34

3.3.2 Symptoms/Diagnosis of ADHD 34

3.3.3 Treatment of ADHD 34

3.4 Research Question 2

3.4.1 Associated Features of ADHD 35

3.4.2 Symptoms/Diagnosis of ADHD 37

3.4.3 Treatment of ADHD 39

3.5 Research Question 3

3.6 Qualitative Results 45

3.6.1 Additional comments 46

3.6.2 Participation in workshops on ADHD 46

3.6.3 Favourable topics to be covered in the workshops 47

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

4.1 Discussion 48-54

4.2 Implications of the research 55

4.3 Limitations of the study 55-56

4.4 Recommendations for future research 56

4.5 Conclusion 57

References 58-65

Appendices

Appendix 1: Principal Information Sheet

Appendix 2: Principal Consent Form

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Appendix 5: DSM IV TR (ADHD)

Appendix 6: Figures A-D

Appendix 7: Internal Ethics Clearance Form

Appendix 8: Gauteng Department of Education Clearance Form

List of Tables — Page Number

Table 1: Sections of the questionnaire corresponding to research questions of the study 22

Table 2: Measures of internal consistency reliability of the three content areas of ADHD 33

Table 3: Summary descriptive statistics of the three content areas of ADHD 33

Table 4: Associated features of ADHD 36

Table 5: Symptoms/Diagnosis item statistics 38

Table 6: Treatment item statistics 40

Table 7: ADHD content areas compared across levels of demographic variables 43

List of Figures — Page Number

Figure 1: Educators' confidence to educate children with ADHD 28

Figure 2: Number of hours of ADHD training received by educators 29

Figure 3: Number of workshops on ADHD attended by educators 29

Figure 4: Number of articles read on ADHD by educators 30

Figure 5: Number of children taught diagnosed as ADHD 31

Figure 6: Number of evaluations made by educators 31

Figure 7: Categorised responses to Associated Features items 37

Figure 8: Categorised responses to Symptoms/Diagnosis items 39

Figure 9: Categorised responses to Treatment items 41

Figure 10: Graphic representation of mean of the ADHD content areas by levels of demographic variables for significant ANOVA comparisons 44

Figure 11: Profile graph of characteristics of educator respondents who want versus do not want to attend an ADHD workshop 45