

**FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF ATTENTION
DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) AT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

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A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters in Education (Educational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of
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DECLARATION

I, Anwynne Kern, declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Education (Educational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

Anwynne Kern

November, 2008

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, Jeremy, who has been a pillar of strength and a tower of support, without whom this year would not have been possible.

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To all the participants in the study.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated foundation phase educators' perceptions of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The educators' views on the causes, appropriate interventions and incidence rates of ADHD were examined. A sample of 140 foundation phase educators from mainstream private and public schools participated in the study. The educators completed a self-developed questionnaire that had been piloted by the researcher. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, in conjunction with t-tests to ascertain the differences in responses between public and private school educators. Thematic content analysis was used to identify the main categories and themes that emerged from the open-ended questions. The results revealed that the educators had a limited understanding of ADHD, in terms of what it is as well as its causes. In addition, it emerged that the educators preferred medication as the intervention method despite being aware of additional intervention methods. A comparison of the private and public school educators' results indicated no significant difference in the educators' perceptions regarding the cause, interventions or incidence rate of ADHD. These findings are discussed in relation to empirical studies and suggestions for future research are presented.

Key words:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), perceptions of ADHD, perceived incidence rate of ADHD at private and public schools

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