Objectives: : Guidelines of the AAP recommend that primary care clinicians initiate an evaluation for ADHD in any child who presents with academic/behavioral problems that may represent ADHD. However, without surveillance, many physicians may delay identification. Increasingly, clinicians are using developmental screening tests at regular intervals in children to identify developmental delays. In Canada, most physicians are familiar with the the Rourke and the Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS), while in the U.S., the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) are most commonly used. If such tools are able to identify behavioral markers of ADHD, they may aid in identifying children with ADHD at a younger age. The current study aimed to evaluate the accuracy of such tools in identifying children at-risk for ADHD. **Methods:** 303 children aged 24-60 months were recruited. Parents completed 4screening tests: the NDDS, Rourke, PEDS and ASQ. Children underwent a psychological assessment including a diagnostic interview for ADHD (DSM-IV-TR) and administration of the CBCL, tests of cognition, language and adaptive behavior. **Results:** 6 children (2%) were identified as having ADHD. The PEDS had moderate sensitivity for identifying children with ADHD (83%). All of the other broad-band tests had poor sensitivity for identifying ADHD: 50% for the NDDS, Rourke , and ASQ. Specificity was low in all cases: NDDS (66%), Rourke (75%), PEDS (62%), ASQ (72%). **Conclusions:** This study demonstrates that with the exception of the PEDS, most developmental screening tests lack the accuracy to identify preschool children with ADHD. Although it lacks specificity, the PEDS is very brief and easy to administer, and may be useful in eliciting symptoms of ADHD. For those physicians using other developmental screening tests, attention to parent concerns about academic and behavioral problems in addition to inattention, hyperactivity or impulsivity will be necessary.

Title:
Can Developmental Screening Tools Accurately Identify Children with ADHD in Primary Care?