

Questionnaire Survey on ADD/ADHD Profile

1. Diagnosed condition: ADHD ADD
2. Diagnosis carried out by: _____
3. Date of diagnosis (approximate month and year if exact date not known)

4. Gender: Female Male
5. Age: _____
6. School: _____
7. Is the child on medication? Yes No
8. Type of medication (if applicable):

9. Is the child on supplement/s? Yes No
10. Type of supplements (if applicable):

11. Other forms of intervention given (including tuition and other forms of remedial activities)

Your relationship to the child: _____

Your name, child's name and contact number (optional) for clarification purposes if necessary

Your name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Your child's name: _____

I am interested in the research, please call me at the number above.

Please mail this form back to Ang Kai Ling as soon as possible.

Science & Technology Education A.G.

National Institute of Education

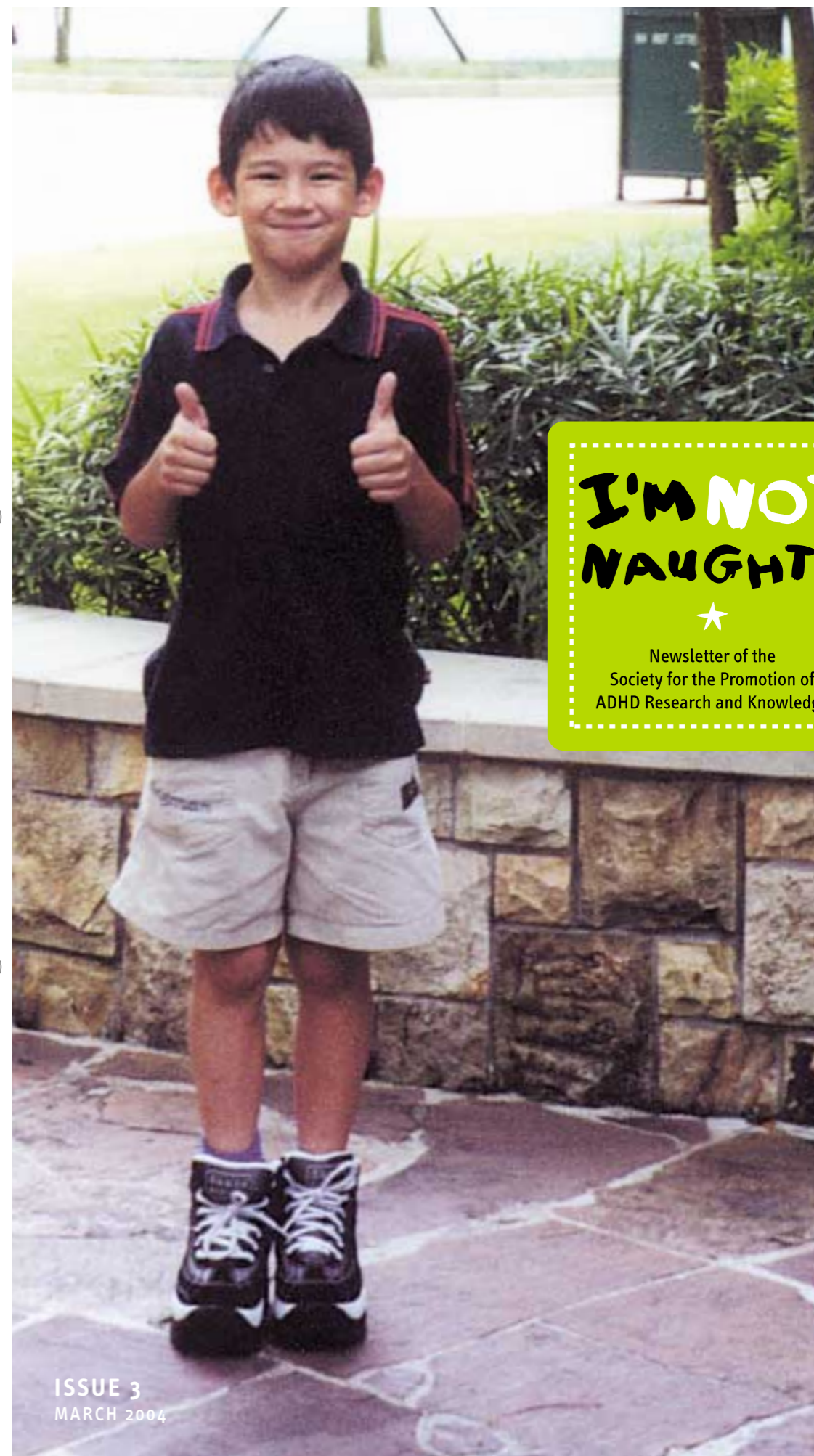
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Thank you for providing the information.

This information is kept strictly confidential and used for academic research purpose only.



Please volunteer



We just held our 4th Annual General Meeting (yes, Spark is nearly four years old!) and I want to thank all those of you who turned up for your show of support. Three office-bearers stood down – Cheng Kah Kee, Pauline New and Fiona Jee – and we want to especially thank them for their contributions.

One of our auditors, Andrew Yeo, resigned too. He wrote: “I am writing to express my appreciation to you and your committee in giving me the opportunity to be part of your organization. Throughout the years, starting from the time of Mrs. Kong, I have had the privilege of listening to, and learning from the many speakers you have invited to talk on the subject of ADHD. I have also benefited from members through exchanges of conversation and ideas. All that I have imbibed I have put them to good use in the upbringing of my son. He is currently in Sec 3. Following the recent visit to the Child Guidance Clinic he was diagnosed to be free of the condition. I now have to deal with other pressing matters and move on. I would like to take leave of the organization and extend to you and your members my very best wishes.”

Andrew, thank you too. And our best wishes to you and your son in all your future endeavours. Come back some time and share your stories with us.

To those who stay on and to the new faces in the new committee, I want to also thank them for taking up the challenge to carry on. Our immediate plan is to start four sub-committees – secretariat, publications, outreach and fund-raising. The AGM also passed changes to our constitution for us to qualify for tax exemption. Hopefully, it won't be long before start raising funds as well as awareness. We will need every member's help.

Please volunteer. Start by filling the form at the back of this newsletter and returning it. A very small first step in a research we are supporting.

Bella Chin, President

A newsletter published by the Society for the Promotion of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Research and Knowledge

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The President's Report for 2003 (edited version)

The Society made further progress in raising ADHD awareness in the community in 2003 through these activities.

ADHD Awareness Talks

Kah Kee continued her talks to primary schools on “Managing the ADHD child in class: A teacher-parent collaboration.” Twelve schools invited her. They were North View, South View, Tanjong Katong, River Valley, Chongzheng, Meridian, Radin Mas, Hong Wen, Farrer Park, Bedok North, Northland, and Ahmad Ibrahim.

These talks were also given in 2003.

- “Understanding ADHD” to NIE Master's students by Kah Kee (Apr)
- “Understanding ADHD” to SINDA by Kah Kee (Jul)
- “Parenting an ADHD child” to IMH by Kah Kee (Oct)
- “What is ADHD” to DAS in-service teachers by Dr Ng K H (Oct)
- “Understanding and managing ADHD children in class” to NIE Advanced Diploma teachers by Christine Keung (Oct).

Sale of CDs on “Managing the ADHD Child in Class” and the handbook for parents, care-givers and teachers, “I'm Not Naughty”

Awareness and education of ADHD amongst teachers and parents were boosted by the Society's sale of the CD for teachers and the ADHD handbook throughout the year.

Parent Support Group (PSG) Meetings

The monthly meetings of the Parent Support Group at Child Guidance Clinic on the first Saturday afternoon (2-5pm) continues to be a major activity of the Society. This meeting offers a forum for parents (especially new parents joining SPARK) to interact with one another and share information and tips with regards to the management of their ADHD children. The group also gives one another moral support and encouragement. External speakers are typically invited for these meetings to speak on topics of interest to the parent group in the management and treatment of ADHD children. The meetings were suspended for three months (Apr to Jun) due to SARS. Some topics and speakers include:

Jan: *Succeeding with ADD/ADHD*. Adrian Tan, CEO of Ad Planet;

Mar: *Creative parenting – ideas that work*. Author and architect Kwok Chow Tim;

Jul: *Nutritional needs of ADD/ADHD children using hair analysis*. Dr Kenneth Kang, neurofeedback therapist & natural health practitioner;

Aug: *How to help increase a child's attention span*. Maths tutor Norman Tien;

Nov: *EEG intervention for ADHD, a proposed research on neurofeedback*. Asst Prof Ang Kai Ling of NIE;

Dec: *William Pelham's Summer Treatment Programme for ADD/ADHD*.

Poon Siew Win, chartered educational psychologist and director of Poon & Associates.

SPARK newsletter

Our newsletter finally got off the ground in Jul 03 through the joint efforts of our Hon Secretary Edmund Wee and committee member Lee Swee Huat. Edmund designed and produced the newsletter with contribution of articles by Swee Huat. Two issues (Jul and Oct) were released in the second half of 2003. The newsletter now forms part of our publicity material on the Society and ADHD.

Joining the National Council of Social Services (NCSS)

We applied for membership of NCSS in Jul 03 and SPARK was admitted as a full member of NCSS on 18 Aug 03. We then applied to the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore for registration of SPARK as a charity organization, and this application is pending the amendment of some aspects of our Constitution as required by IRAS for all charities. The amendments for the Constitution will be proposed for the AGM in March 04.

Plans for 2004 and beyond

Going forward SPARK should now go beyond creating awareness for ADHD into helping to address ADHD children's needs, in the areas of diagnosis and treatments. The Society will look into areas of collaboration with the other organizations and research bodies supporting special needs for mutual benefit.

To give the Society more structure and to facilitate growth, we would like to set up an office or secretariat in 2004 to deal with administration of the society, and to organize activities, including fund-raising. We need volunteers to come forward to help the Society in various ways. What SPARK can achieve for our ADHD community depends on each and every one of us.

Bella Chin, President

Hi!

My name is Garth. I have ADD

And I am a lecturer at a local polytechnic. I have ADD. I have 3 degrees and many more successes than I do failures.

It is important to believe in your son, yourself, and all of your wonderful skills and abilities. One of the most important things for parents, children, and teachers to know is that many of the struggles and failures of ADD/ADHD children, and others, occur because the way in which they learn is incompatible with the way they're being taught.

Schools are filled with students who, as a result of their educational experience, convince themselves that they are "losers" or just "dumb". It's needless.

My own story is filled with challenges I've faced because the way my brain is "wired" and the way others brains are "wired" are different. Neither one is better than or worse than the other. It's just different.

What is important is for your child, yourself, and your child's teachers to take time and deliberate effort to become aware of how your child's mind is "wired". I also know it's painful for all (student, parent and teacher) to understand and overcome this challenge. Many times everyone is simply unaware of the fact that the demands and expectations created by traditional teaching styles and classrooms are not in sync with the "wiring" of a student's brain.

Telling a student "you can do better if you would just try harder" doesn't help much, especially if he is doing or has done his best. Punishing a student for an inability to complete a task in a particular way is also ineffective and often inappropriate. Encouraging feelings of humiliation and guilt due to circumstances not in your child's control is hurtful and unnecessary.

ADD/ADHD are terms referring to a very broad range of behaviors and kinds of minds. Diagnosis is helpful in beginning the journey to understanding your child but is inadequate in

pointing more directly to specific areas of learning breakdowns.

Knowing I am ADD does not tell me, or others, what is going on in my mind when I am trying to understand a mathematics problem or follow detailed instructions. Learning how to identify exactly where a learning breakdown is occurring when a student is falling behind begins with the teacher, parents, clinicians and the student himself working together.

We often leave children out of this extremely important process without acknowledging a child's wisdom and knowing. Once areas of weaknesses are identified work can begin on the development of a detailed learning plan.

Also, pay attention to and identify your child's strengths. Encourage your child and his teachers to focus on areas of strength as well as weaknesses.

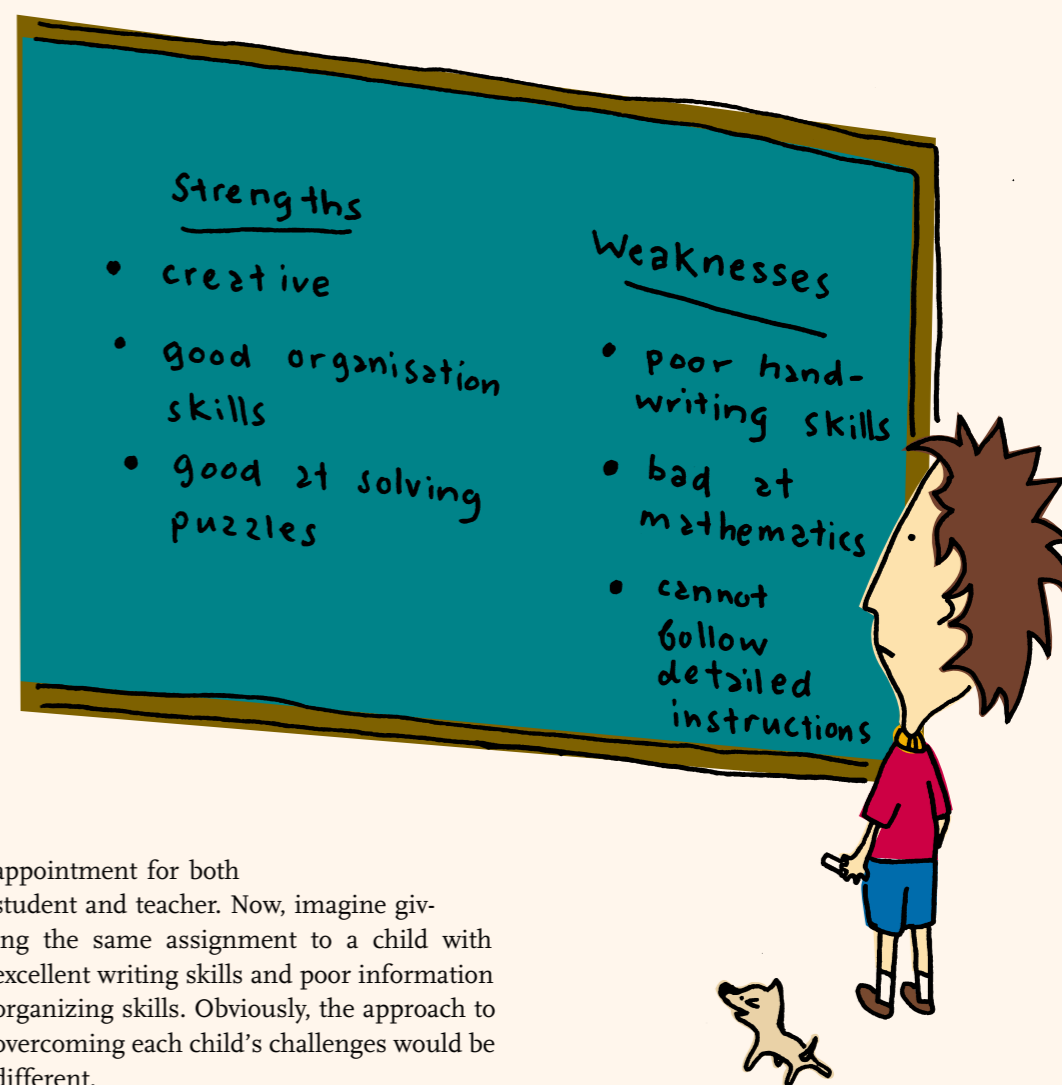
And remember, KIDS CHANGE OVER TIME. Learning demands and social demands change as well as your child's brain.

It is quite possible for your child to experience learning difficulties at one point in his education and experience learning success at another. All of us can point to someone who showed little signs of success at an early age only to have become a highly successful adult. And, vice-versa, we can all remember a student who was voted "most likely to succeed" and didn't.

Education is a multi-faceted and complex process. It is important for parents, teachers, and students to work together towards recognizing which learning situations are most difficult, when they occur, and reasons for them.

Is there a breakdown in language comprehension, memory, attention, fine motor skills, organizing information, social skills?

Imagine a child with wonderful organizational skills and creative abilities who has very poor handwriting skills. What happens when he is asked to draft an essay or write a paragraph or even a sentence? Most likely, frustration and dis-



appointment for both student and teacher. Now, imagine giving the same assignment to a child with excellent writing skills and poor information organizing skills. Obviously, the approach to overcoming each child's challenges would be different.

Understanding as precisely as possible what is happening in the child's learning mind is vitally important.

In the first case the teacher and child would be better off with an approach that emphasizes improving handwriting skills. Perhaps using a computer to create drafts. In the second case the teacher and child would experience a lot of frustration if the strategy to learning was kept the same. A better approach would be to help break the task into smaller, more specific steps or follow a checklist (tick off the steps as they finish).

There are all kinds of minds and using one approach to teach all of them is foolish. ADD/ADHD is not a disease requiring a cure. It is an opportunity for all of us to better our understanding of how minds work and improve our strategies for teaching and learning.

Yes, students have a responsibility to learn. Yes, teachers have a responsibility to teach. To do

this best requires students, teachers, and parents to deliberately understand how people learn (similarities and differences) and as many strategies for teaching as possible.

Create a log of when, where, and under what circumstances your child has the most difficulty. Ask the teacher to help. Ask your child what is happening (gently) and ask the teacher what is happening.

Compare all of the information you gather and look for "hot spots", areas that repeat themselves or stand out. Do research on learning styles, teaching approaches, learning challenges and strategies for both the learner and the teacher.

When language turns to "blaming" either the child, teacher, or parent, stop...and take time to understand the differences and uncover approaches that work better.

The link between gut health and ADHD

When and where: 3 April 2004, 2- 5PM, Child Guidance Clinic,

Speaker: Dr Lynn Lim, naturopathic physician, complementary healthCare

There is evidence that brain function is closely linked to gut health. It has been shown that as the gut is healed, many of the behavioural traits and learning difficulties associated with ADHD and ADD also improve. Such gut dysfunctions can be established by testing specimens like stools and urine. Significant improvements in the areas of behaviour, concentration, and physiology have been observed once the gut function is normalized. In this talk, Dr. Lim will explain the possible areas of gut dysfunction that can affect the brain and strategies to correct them.

It is our conviction that the bio-medical approach also enhances effectiveness of other behavioural and sensory therapies in the treatment of ADD/ADHD. It is highly recommended that such conventional therapies be carried out concurrently.

About the speaker

Dr. Lim has been practicing naturopathic medicine since 1997 in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. She integrates naturopathic and homeopathic medicine for a holistic approach to healing. She specializes in women's and family healthcare with emphasis on natural fertility management, allergy testing and desensitization, natural weight management, functional medicine and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Working with ADHD children

When and where: 8 May 2004, 2 - 5PM, Child Guidance Clinic

Speakers: Anthony Yeo, clinical director, and Foo Soo Jen, therapist, Counselling and Care Centre

Anthony will be sharing his experiences in working with families whose children are ADHD with and without other forms of learning disabilities. What intervention programs and counselling services the Care & Counselling Centre (CCC) offers.

About Mr Yeo

Mr Anthony Yeo, Clinical Director of Counselling and Care Centre, has been practising as a psychotherapist, marriage and family therapist since 1972. He is also a lecturer and trainer of counsellors not only in Singapore but also in other parts of Asia. He has authored several books on counselling, stress and issues related to mental health.

The Counselling and Care Centre is a non-governmental, non-profit agency offering psychological counselling services and training for professionals in the mental health and social services. It is a Registered Society, affiliated to the National Council of Social Service and a member organisation of the Community Chest of Singapore.



Learning Differently talks for \$5

The Society for Reading and Literacy (Singapore) Special Interest Group – Learning Differently has opened its monthly talks to Spark members for a token \$5. It meets at the Programme Zone in Queenstown Community Library to discuss and share information about learning differences.

In the months ahead, these are speakers and the topics of their talks:

Apr 7: Cheng Kah Kee on Helping your child with learning challenges survive the PSLE.

May 5: Savleen Bajaj on Enhancing memory strategies in pupils

Jul 7: Moira Dempsey on Addressing learning stresses through kinesiology.

Aug 4: Cathy Lee on Capitalising on learning styles. This talk is open to the public.

Closer to the dates, please check its web page (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/srlsigld>) for last minute changes.

Neurofeedback training: does it work?

Assistant Professor Ang Kai Ling of the National Institute of Education at NTU outlines the research she plans to carry out with Spark

Since 1990, American students diagnosed with ADHD have increased from 900,000 to about 7 million and the use of stimulant medications has increased 700% in the same period. The problem in Singapore is not clear due to the lack of published statistical information. In general, ADD students require different approaches to help them learn effectively.

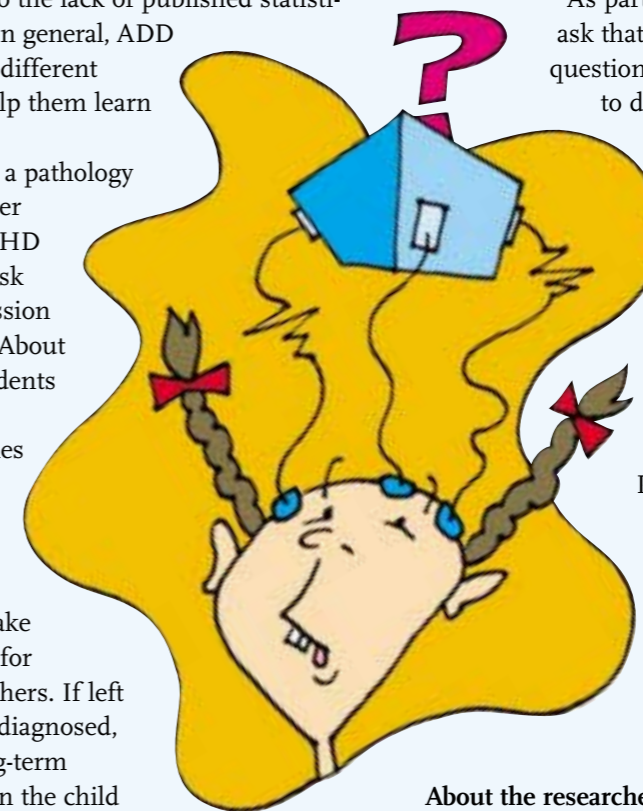
ADHD is not a pathology but without proper intervention, ADHD students are at risk to anxiety, depression and drug abuse. About 25% of these students in US also have learning disabilities and as many as 50% develop conduct problems. The condition can make life very difficult for families and teachers. If left untreated or misdiagnosed, it can have a long-term adverse impact on the child and his or her academic, social and emotional well-being.

Electroencephalogram neurofeedback training (EEG NFT), a non-invasive technique, has been recommended as an alternative therapy to medication and behaviour modification. A research by Rossier and LaVaque in 1995 found that NFT produced the same effects as Ritalin in 46 ADHD and ADD children and young adults although there was some debate on the design of the study.

As part of the National Institute Education's research focus on brain research, I am currently embarking on a rigorous PhD programme to study the effects of EEG NFT on ADHD children. If the research finds such interventions to be positive, it will have a significant contribution

and allow alternative education strategies to be developed in schools to help our ADHD students engage in meaningful learning. This will not only benefit the students, but parents and teachers too.

As part of the research design, I ask that you complete the simple questionnaire behind to allow me to derive an indicative profile of ADHD children in Singapore. The data will be essential and prove most useful to assist in the development of suitable research design, intervention strategies and data collection techniques. Please be assured that the information provided by you will be strictly kept confidential and does not imply any commitment to participate in the study at a later stage.



About the researcher

Kai Ling is the author of "My Pals are Here" health education textbooks, activity books and teachers' guide for Primary One to Six. She obtained her Masters in Nutrition from King's College, University of London in 1994. Since then, she has been lecturing in Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education. She has given nutritional talks, seminars and counselling workshops to school children (e.g., Fit and Trim programme), athletes (e.g., Singapore soccer team) and the general public (e.g., Tanglin Rotary Club). She has also drawn up healthy luncheon menu for CEOs at Raffles Marina and menu for a children's home.

