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OVERVIEW OF ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is primarily a non-industrial genetic disorder initially presenting in childhood. In approximately 75% of cases, the symptoms will persist.

Adult Attention Deficit Disorder has been associated with the following problems:

- 1) Auditory and Visual Distractibility
- 2) Impulsivity
- 3) Hyperactivity

Attached are questionnaires for detecting the presence of Adult Attention Deficit Disorder by Dr. Triolola and Dr. Walid Shekim, Professor Emeritus at UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute in Los Angeles. Please note his modified rating scales from the DSM-IV in adults. Take special note of the rating scale from the spouse/significant other. There is also a QCC Adult Questionnaire Childhood Characteristics Scale of ADHD symptoms that occurred as a child. Some symptoms may persist into adulthood.

Persistent ADHD can cause significant difficulties in the following areas:

- 1) Work – Adult patients with ADHD may have problems with significant disorganization. They may be oppositional and may be verbally impulsive. Due to impulsivity and distractibility, there is increased incidence of significant work-related physical injuries. Additionally, patients with ADHD may have difficulty holding jobs because of their impulsivity, errors, poor attendance, mood lability, and difficulty getting along with other employees. One of the signs of an adult with ADHD is the person's job history. Applicants may have an employment history indicating an inability to remain in a job for more than a few months to a year. In contrast, people without ADHD tend to have an employment history revealing only a few jobs over a period of many years.
- 2) Marital or Relationship Problems – Applicants with ADHD tend to have significant marital discord. If they have ADHD associated with depression, they may have a history of violence and should be checked for restraining orders.

Comorbidity:

It should be noted that The Center for Attention Deficit and Associated Disorders indicates that at least 50% to 70% of patients with ADHD have comorbid disorders. A comorbid disorder is defined as a specific psychiatric disorder that may occur with ADHD which may or may not be caused specifically by ADHD.

Adults with ADHD had a much higher rate of substance abuse. In fact, all patients with substance abuse should be screened for ADHD.

Patients with ADHD also have higher incidence of all depressive disorders including Bipolar Disorder (previously called "Manic-Depressive Disorder").

It is my opinion that many of these cases go undiagnosed. Since the incidence of ADHD is approximately 5% in the adult population, employers -- including those in Human Relations and supervisors -- should have knowledge of this disorder so that if an employee presents with these disabling symptoms, the employee should be strongly encouraged to obtain an evaluation from a Board-certified psychiatrist.

Current medications are approximately 90% efficacious in reducing the morbidity of this disorder. Furthermore, economically diagnosing and treating this disorder will result in a significant reduction of serious physical injuries and should reduce psychosocial problems occurring in the workplace that are non-industrial in causation.