

## Level Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Well-being among Parents of Children with ADHD in Indonesia

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**Abstract :** Caring for children with ADHD is an essential responsibility for parents, as they need to ensure proper treatment and support their mental health. To gain insight into the well-being of these parents, we conducted an online survey through the WhatsApp group 'Smart Parent Anak ADHD'. The group consists of 300 members from Indonesia, and 65 of them, which is 22% of the group, responded to the survey. We used the DASS tool to measure levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as the WHO well-being instrument to assess caregiver well-being. The results revealed that 60% of parents experienced symptoms of anxiety, ranging from mild to very severe, while 62% experienced mild to very severe depression. Moreover, out of all the respondents, only 20, which is 30.8%, received a well-being score of 60 or higher (out of 100).

### INTRODUCTION

ADHD, also known as Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, is a type of neurodevelopmental condition that impacts around 5-7% of children globally (APA, 2013). It can cause symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, or a combination of both. Some of these symptoms may continue into adulthood, while others may disappear as the child grows up (Sadock & Sadock, 2014). Children with ADHD often face difficulties with academic performance, interpersonal relationships, internal functions, and communication with parents, teachers, and peers (Powell et al, 2010). Additionally, parents of children with ADHD experience more stress and less satisfaction compared to those with typical children (Barkley, 2005). As the most common behavioral disorder in childhood, ADHD has a chronic nature and affects the life of both the child and the caregiver (Mousavi, 2015). Parents play a vital role in supporting their child's mental health, but the mental burden of caring for a child with ADHD is often overlooked. Parenting stress

occurs when parents feel overwhelmed by their roles and responsibilities and are unable to cope with difficult situations. This can lead to a feeling of being unable to handle the challenges of parenting (Sharma et al, 2022). McCubbin and Patterson (1983) suggest that mental illness can lead to significant stress for families. Additionally, anxiety is the sensation of uneasiness regarding unpredictable future events (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983). Research has indicated that ADHD in children can have adverse effects on parents' stress levels, quality of life, and psychological well-being (Munoz-Silva et al, 2017), (Cappe et al, 2017), (Craig et al, 2016). Our recent study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the difficulties faced by parents who are caring for children with ADHD. Our goal was to evaluate the extent of stress, anxiety, depression, and overall well-being these parents experience.

## METHOD

From June 1st to 10th, 2022, a quantitative descriptive study was conducted to evaluate the anxiety, depression, and well-being levels of parents with ADHD children. The study was conducted using an online survey on the WhatsApp group 'Smart Parent Anak ADHD' community, which has over 300 active members engaging in conversations and discussions in groups of around 100 individuals. This community includes parents of ADHD children and psychologists and psychiatrists from different parts of Indonesia, who offer communication and support to members. To measure stress, anxiety, and depression, we used the DASS instrument, while the WHO-5 well-being instrument was used to measure well-being. The WHO-5 is a generic self-report instrument that measures psychological well-being (12). The questionnaire was distributed in Google form format, and the data obtained were tabulated and analyzed.

## RESULTS

### Description of Research Finding

#### Characteristics of Research Subjects

Based on Table 1, The majority of research subjects' fathers had Bachelor's degrees, with 38 people (58.5%) having this level of education, followed by a master's education in as many as 11 people (16.9%), high school education as many as ten people (15.4%) and diplomas as many as five people (9.2%).

Among the surveyed mothers, 38 (58.5%) held a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, while 10 (15.4%) had a high school diploma, 9 (13.8%) had a diploma, and 8 (12.3%) had a master's degree.

In families with children diagnosed with ADHD, 92.3% had one family member with ADHD, while 7.7% had two to five family members with ADHD.

The age range of children with an ADHD diagnosis in care is as follows: 0-5 years (19 people, 29.2%), >5-10 years (33 people, 50.8%),

<10-15 years (9 people, 13.8%), and >15 years (4 people, 6.2%).

We discovered that 67.7% of the children were diagnosed with ADHD by a child psychiatrist, whereas 32.3% remained undiagnosed. Additionally, 41.5% of children have received medication from a psychiatrist, and 58.5% have not.

Table 1: Description of the Characteristics of the Research Subjects

Research Variables	n	Percentage (%)
Father's Education Level		
High School/equivalent	10	15.4
Diploma	6	9.2
Bachelor	38	58.5
Master	11	16.9
Mother's Education Level		
High School/equivalent	10	15.4
Diploma	9	13.8
Bachelor	38	58.5
Master	8	12.3
Number of children with ADHD diagnosis		
One child	60	92.3
Two children	5	7.7
Age of child in care with ADHD diagnosis		
0-5 y.o	19	29.2
> 5-10 y.o	33	50.8
> 10-15 y.o	9	13.8
> 15 y.o	4	6.2
Diagnosed with ADHD by a psychiatrist/ child psychiatrist		
Never	21	32.3
Yes	44	67.7
Have received medication from a psychiatrist/child psychiatrist for ADHD		
Never	21	40.4
Yes	31	59.6

### Description of DASS Score

Table 2: Description of DASS Anxiety, DASS Depression, and DASS Stress Score

Variable	n	Percentage (%)
Anxiety		
Normal (0-9)	26	40.0
Mild (10-13)	12	18.5
Moderate (14-20)	16	24.6

Variable	n	Percentage (%)
Severe (21-27)	5	7.7
Extremely Severe (28+)	6	9.2
Depression	25	38.5
Normal (0-7)	1	1.5
Mild (8-9)	15	23.1
Moderate (10-14)	5	12.3
Severe (15-19)	16	24.6
Extremely Severe (20+)	33	50.8
Stress	4	6.2
Normal (0-14)	9	13.8
Mild (15-18)	15	23.1
Moderate (19-25)	4	6.2
Severe (26-33)		
Extremely Severe (34+)		

Table 2 in DASS Anxiety shows that the majority (40.0%) scored 0-9, falling under the normal category. The mild category, with a score between 10-13, is present in 12 individuals (18.5%). There are 16 people (24.6%) who fall under the moderate category, which is defined as having a score between 14-20. The severe type, with a score of 21-27, is present in five individuals (7.7%). Finally, six individuals (9.2%) scored extremely severe, with a score of 28 or above.

Out of the total number of participants, 25 individuals (38.5%) fell under the normal category of depression, with a score ranging from 0 to 7. Only one person (1.5%) was in the mild category of depression, with a score of 8-9. The moderate category, with a score of 10-14, had 15 individuals (23.1%), while the severe type, with a score between 15-19, had eight people (12.3%). The extremely severe category, with a score of 20+, had 16 participants (24.6%).

Out of the total participants, 33 people (50.8%) scored within the normal range of 0-14 on the DASS stress test. Four people (6.2%) fell under the mild category with a score of 15-18, while nine (13.8%) scored in the moderate range of 19-25. Fifteen people (23.1%) showed severe stress with a score of 26-33, and four people (6.2%) were classified as highly severe with a score of 34 or higher.

### Description of WHO Score

Table 3 shows the distribution of scores among participants. Twelve individuals (18.5%) scored 44, 8 (12.3%) scored 56, 6 (9.2%) scored 52, 5 (7.7%) scored 48 and 68, 4 (6.2%) scored 24, 60, and 80, and 3 (4.6%) scored 32, 40, and 72. 2 (3.1%) scored 84, while 1 (1.5%) scored 12, 16, 20, 36, 64, and 76.

Table 3: Skor WHO

Skor WHO	n	Presentase (%)
12	1	1.5
16	1	1.5
20	1	1.5
24	4	6.2
32	3	4.6
36	1	1.5
40	3	4.6
44	12	18.5
48	5	7.7
52	6	9.2
56	8	12.3
60	4	6.2
64	1	1.5
68	5	7.7
72	3	4.6
76	1	1.5
80	4	6.2
84	2	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to the WHO well-being score, 20 people (30.8%) had a good score of 60 or above, while 45 individuals (69.2%) scored below 60, indicating lower well-being.

### DISCUSSION

In 2012, Sethi et al. conducted a study on stress and its associated factors in parents of children with ADHD. The study found that fathers who have attained higher levels of education tend to experience less stress. In our study, all participants had graduated from high school or higher education (100%) and most participants had completed bachelor's degrees (58.5%). We found that most participants showed normal levels of anxiety, depression,

and stress, which accounted for 40%, 38.5%, and 50.8%, respectively.

Conversely, our research revealed that 60% of parents reported experiencing anxiety symptoms, varying from mild to very severe. Additionally, 62% reported experiencing symptoms of depression, ranging from mild to very severe. This research supports the previous findings of other studies. It was observed that parents of ADHD children experienced high levels of stress and anxiety, which is consistent with studies conducted by Theule et al. (2013) and Gupta (2007). Theule (2013) conducted a meta-analysis which found that parents of children with ADHD experience greater levels of parenting stress than parents who do not have children with ADHD. Other researchers, including Breen & Barkley (1988), Johnson & Reader (2002), and Kadesjö et al. (2002), have also conducted studies indicating a correlation between ADHD and heightened stress levels experienced by parents. One potential reason for this could be that parents may perceive the responsibilities of being a caregiver as more overwhelming than their capabilities to manage them (Muñoz-Silva et al., 2017).

Parents of children with ADHD and developmental disabilities experience higher stress levels than parents of typically developing children, HIV-infected, or asthmatic children. However, we are unable to determine if the observed increase in stress, anxiety, and depression is correlated with the severity of ADHD symptoms due to the inability to assess it. In 2012, Sethi et al. conducted a study on stress and its associated factors in parents of children with ADHD. The study found that fathers who have attained higher levels of education tend to experience less stress. In our study, all participants had graduated from high school or higher education (100%) and most participants had completed bachelor's degrees (58.5%). We found that most participants showed normal levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, which accounted for 40%, 38.5%, and 50.8%, respectively.

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Parents of children with ADHD and developmental disabilities experience higher stress levels than parents of typically developing children, HIV-infected, or asthmatic children. However, we are unable to determine if the observed increase in stress, anxiety, and depression is correlated with the severity of ADHD symptoms due to the inability to assess it.

## CONCLUSION

Based on our initial research, it appears that parents of children with ADHD may experience increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as decreased overall well-being.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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