

ADHD is real
Debunking the myths
and misconceptions

Diagnosis
Treatment and tips
for parents

Try this test
Do you suffer
from ADHD?

**MEDIA
PLANET**

September 2011

ADHD GENERATION

3

FACTS

YOU NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT ADHD

NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAM

San Francisco Giant, Andrés Torres
remains focused on his journey to excellence

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NEWS

Parents and teachers: Make school a team effort

Kids and teens with ADHD may struggle in school but they can thrive if parents and teachers help them stay focused.

Researchers say 65 percent of students with ADHD have trouble with written expressions, which make it challenging for these students to do homework, and write essays.

Parents need to identify the areas where their child has trouble such as memorization or writing and then work with the teacher to address these areas of concern.

For example, if a child forgets his

books or homework assignments at school, a solution is to ask a teacher's aide or a fellow student to help the student gather the necessary materials.

Children with ADHD may have slower development of critical cognitive skills. This can mean they'll have difficulty with organization, memorizing facts, planning for the future and finishing long-term projects. Some kids and teens with ADHD have trouble with time management. Use clocks and timers as reminders of when to work and when to take breaks. Keep the time intervals short so they're manage-



STUDENTS WITH ADHD
Parents should find an advocate for their child at every level of school.
PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

able. Break up longer projects into pieces so they can do a little at a time and ultimately finish the task.

Alternative schools such as a therapeutic day school can help a child learn in an environment tar-

geted to kids with ADHD.

Parents should find an advocate for their child at every level of school, from elementary through high school and college.

Many students with ADHD choose not to go to college because they worry about juggling multiple classes and assignments. Alternatives to college include job training or joining the military.

Don't give up on kids with ADHD. They are smart and can be successful students!

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FACT
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ADHD IS OFTEN DIAGNOSED BETWEEN THE AGES 7-12

↓ **TIPS FOR ADHD TESTING**

An ADHD diagnosis requires long-lasting symptoms, which are present for over six months. ADHD may be diagnosed if your symptoms create difficulty in two or more areas of your life such as work, school, home or social life.

You may have ADHD if you:

- 1.** Have trouble paying attention
- 2.** Are easily distracted
- 3.** Forget daily activities
- 4.** Struggle with instructions
- 5.** Appear not to listen
- 6.** Make careless mistakes
- 7.** Struggle with organization
- 8.** Avoid tasks that require mental effort.

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INSPIRATION



QUESTION & ANSWER



Anthony (Chusy) Haney-Jardine
Sundance Award-Winning Director. His upcoming documentary "Gigante" is a story about Andrés "Yungo" Torres.

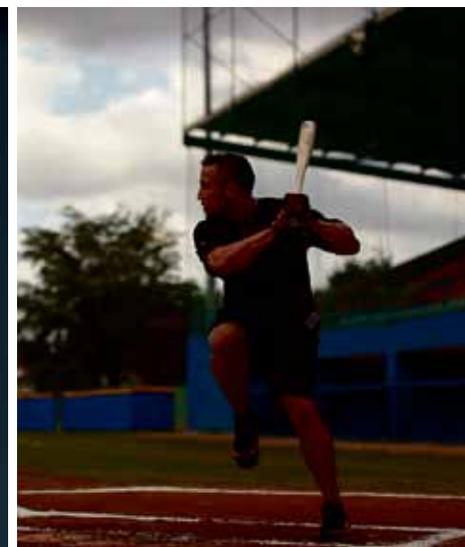
■ **"Gigante" is a beautiful story about a battle with ADHD. Why did you decide to film it?**

I was approached by Will Chang, one of the owners of the SF Giants. He thought it would make a great story and I think he had a special interest in it because he deals with ADHD and connected with the innocent grace that Andrés emanates. You're helpless once you get to know him. Andrés is a beautiful person. It's amazing that he spent 12 years in the minors, persevered and won a World Series ring. Also, my company, PLAN A FILMS has a simple mantra that guides our work: We make movies that matter.

■ **What myths about ADHD do you hope to dispel?**

My null hypothesis was that everyone was ADD/ADHD, so I was simply making a film about a baseball player who was somewhere further down the continuum than I was. But in the end, since we all lived with it, it didn't need particular attention paid to it and that it was used as an excuse by athletes and students, often to abuse the medication or to deflect responsibilities. Boy was I wrong. There is so much research and evidence that it's an undeniable disorder.

PHOTO CREDIT: PLAN A FILMS



HUMBLE GIANT: LEFT: Back in Miami he used a mattress to practice his soft toss. CENTER: "I had my dream, my faith and a huge desire to live it," says Andrés Torres. RIGHT: "Yungo" developed strategies and support systems that helped him become a key player for the San Francisco Giants.

PHOTO: (LEFT TO RIGHT) PLAN A FILMS, ©2011 S.F. GIANTS, PLAN A FILMS

From baseball to the big screen, Andrés Torres is an Inspiration

■ **Question:** What message does Major League Baseball player Andrés Torres have for others with ADHD?

■ **Answer:** Take care of yourself, stay positive and always look forward.

He's a center fielder for the World Series-winning San Francisco Giants, but 33-year-old Andrés Torres is more than a baseball player. He's an inspiration for people dealing with ADHD, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Diagnosis and determination

For years, Torres didn't know he had ADHD. Then in 2002, a coach in Triple-A Toledo whose two children had ADHD, asked the team to get Torres evaluated. The diagnosis made sense, even though Torres had never considered his behaviors

to be ADHD.

"I knew that I was really hyper, forgetful," he says. "It was really hard for me to concentrate but I never thought it was a condition."

Nowadays, Torres is proud to wear his number 56, especially after years of struggling to succeed as a professional baseball player.

"It's a challenge to be able to focus and concentrate at game time," he says. "What hurt me the most as a baseball player is that I can't stay with the same thing for long; that makes me change my batting [stance] so often that it affects me negatively."

Inspirational athlete

Despite these obstacles, Torres continues to play well in San Francisco. Plus he's a great spirit in the clubhouse. Giants' players, coaches and trainers voted to make the Puerto Rico native

the recipient of the 2010 "Willie McCovey Award," an annual honor for the most inspirational player on the team.

"Now that I understand more about ADHD I realize why it took me so long to be successful and to be able to see my dream come true," Torres explains. "[I'm] getting medication that helps me stay more focused but it's still a daily battle."

Torres' ADHD story is profiled in the new documentary "Gigante," by Sundance award-winning director, Anthony (Chusy) Haney-Jardine.

Looking back, Torres says he would have educated himself more about ADHD and wouldn't be "so hard" on himself.

"For many years I asked myself WHY? Why it's so hard, why it takes me longer than I thought? Why if I'm a great athlete?" he

says. "But the answer was: I have ADHD and I need to take care of myself."

Persistence pays

He still forgets things and can't always pay attention, but Torres refuses to give up.

"I believe that when you give everything, your persistence and hard work will pay off," he explains. "In February 2007, I found myself crying with no job right before spring training, but I never gave up my dream to be a big league player."

"In November 2010, I found myself crying again, but this time of joy, with my family and so grateful to God—being a World Series Champion. Follow your dream, always look forward, give everything you have and be proud of yourself."

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INSIGHT

Treatment and diagnosis: Facing the ADHD challenge



Question: How is ADHD Treated?

Answer: ADHD can be treated with medicine, behavioral and cognitive treatments.

About 4.5 million children ages three to 17 have ADHD. As recognition of the disorder improves, diagnosis is growing.

Myths and misconceptions

ADHD is often misunderstood as not being a real illness. For example, people with undiagnosed ADHD are often wrongly labeled as lazy or stupid. Sometimes they blame the disorder on “bad” parenting.

Still another misconception exists where people without ADHD assume they have it just because they’re overwhelmed by technology in a fast-paced society.



Ruth Hughes, PhD
Chief Executive Officer
CHADD

Diagnosis and treatment

An ADHD diagnosis must come from a doctor who will evaluate a patient’s symptoms, ask why the patient is concerned about an ADHD diagnosis, determine academic, social and job concerns possibly related to ADHD, and assess whether the patient has other psychiatric, neurological or medical disorders.

If medication is needed, a doctor will start one medication at a time. Methylphenidate is a common medication used to treat ADHD. Stimulant medications come in a variety of doses which allow for slow or fast release, providing treat-

ment from eight to twelve hours.

The non-profit group, Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) says the combination of medicine, behavioral and cognitive treatments are more beneficial together than any of these treatments on their own.

Some of the non-medical treatments are to modify behavior by taking frequent breaks, giving yourself pep talks, and rewarding yourself on the way to achieving goals. Another way to self-regulate is to make notes and to-do lists focusing on the goal and the progress already made.

Neurofeedback may also be a tool to improve ADHD by training the brain to increase alertness and reduce ADHD symptoms.

Treating young adults

Young people with ADHD often have symptoms into early adult-

hood. Adjusting to school, work and adult life can be tough especially without parental oversight. These patients should work with doctors and counselors, especially because people with ADHD are six times more likely to have other psychiatric problems.

Many young adults benefit from ADHD coaching to develop and maintain focus, get organized, learn time management and work on social skills. A proper diet, regular exercise and meditation can also be helpful.

“If you think you have ADHD or are recently diagnosed, you are not alone,” says Ruth Hughes, PhD, chief executive officer of CHADD. “Get evaluated, get educated, choose a treatment option and join a support group. Life will get better.”

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NEWS IN BRIEF

ADHD and driving risks

Young drivers with ADHD are two to four times more likely to have traffic accidents, three times as likely to have injuries, four times more likely to be at fault, and six to eight times more likely to have their licenses suspended.

To date, medication is the only known treatment shown to help ADHD driving behavior.

Effective behavioral treatments are needed that can help young drivers with ADHD while driving, or at the point of performance.

Based on the research, clinicians should educate patients and their caregivers about the increased risk of adverse outcomes among untreated individuals with ADHD.

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