



Gifted Children Can Be at Risk for Medical Misdiagnosis

- Gifted children are in every pediatric medical practice.
- These children possess advanced aptitudes, yet can present in complex ways, making identification challenging.
- They can develop negative coping skills due to lack of support and understanding.
- Typical gifted behaviors may resemble behavioral disorders, while certain medical disorders may be minimized or go unnoticed.
- Gifted children then can be incorrectly diagnosed and treated, overlooked or misunderstood.

Early Recognition & Intervention are Crucial



The Challenge for Clinicians

- Clinicians seldom receive formal instruction about giftedness.
- Parents may feel boastful discussing giftedness with their child's doctor.
- Behaviors directly associated with giftedness may mimic medical or mental health disorders.
- Some gifted children do have medical and mental health conditions (2e, twice-exceptional), and differentiating between an actual diagnosis and a misdiagnosis can be challenging.

CLINICAL TRAIT	POSSIBLE GIFTED EXPLANATION	POSSIBLE MEDICAL MISDIAGNOSIS
High activity level	Passionate learner, kinesthetic learner	ADHD
Low impulse control, impatient, interrupts others	Asynchrony, judgment lags intelligence (delay of prefrontal cortex)	ADHD
Worries frequently	Idealistic, grapples with moral, ethical, philosophical issues, spiritual issues	Anxiety disorder, depression
Extra-sensitive to loud noise, clothing tags, fluorescent lights	Dabrowski's overexcitabilities	Sensory-motor integration disorder, auditory-processing disorder
Difficulty relating to classmates, atypical humor	Asynchrony, unusual interests and passions	Autism spectrum
Distractible, fails to complete tasks, refuses to do schoolwork	Daydreams, active imagination, needs to be intellectually challenged	ADHD, learning disability, auditory-processing disorder, conduct disorder
Stubborn, averse to transitions	Independent, high expectations, deep interests, drive to learn	Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, autism spectrum
Highly emotional, moody, argumentative	High sensitivity, intensity, asynchrony, needs increased challenge	Mood disorder, conduct disorder
Fine motor coordination delays, poor handwriting	Asynchrony, mind quicker than hand	Dysgraphia, dyslexia, learning disability
Atypical sleep pattern	Low need to sleep, won't stop learning to sleep, nightmares, vivid dreams	Sleep disorder, ADHD, mood disorder
Atypical eating pattern	Too busy learning to eat, averse to food textures	Food allergies, eating disorder, mood disorder
Speech delays	Asynchrony	Autism spectrum

GIFTED...It Need Not Be an Elitist Word:

Let's not disillusion our brightest minds before they even get a chance.

Educate Yourself About Giftedness:

Pediatric clinicians play a pivotal role in promoting healthy growth and development in gifted children.

- Enhance future interactions with gifted children and their parents.
- Obtain tangible educational measures to help address concerns efficiently.
- Decrease misdiagnoses and promote greater sensitivity in providing services.
- Improve medical care and support for gifted children and their families.



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- [Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnosis of Gifted Children and Adults](#) (Webb, et al)
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Office@SENGifted.org
(844) 488-SENG (7364)
www.SENGIfted.org
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Decreasing Medical Misdiagnosis In Gifted Children