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HEALTH & FITNESS

Adult ADD Factbook: The Truth about Adult Attention Deficit Disorder Updated November 2011
Ron Sterling
Unsheepable Publications
978-0-615-52526-6
Four Stars (out of Five)

In the *Adult ADD Factbook*, Ron Sterling, a psychiatrist based in Washington state, presents his paradigm-shifting ideas about adult attention deficit disorder. He pulls together hundreds of research studies to support his belief that adult ADD is grossly underdiagnosed and misdiagnosed, has a genuine upside, and responds well to Ritalin (70 percent of the time) when correctly dosed. He even suggests that the condition played a significant role in the rise of Western Hemisphere civilization because those with adult ADD were more comfortable with the risk taking involved in exploration. His confident and enthusiastic assertions about these and other controversial ideas make the book an intellectually challenging and pleasurable read.

Sterling focuses on the genetic, behavioral, and chemical factors and effects of dopamine deficiency in comparison to normal dopamine levels. From obesity and substance abuse to high blood pressure and thrill-seeking behaviors, dopamine levels play a paramount role, according to Sterling. If properly diagnosed and treated, he believes, 98 percent of people with adult ADD can be helped. The author backs up his sometimes radical conclusions with a multitude of reputable studies.

The *Adult ADD Factbook* is meticulously organized into twenty-one chapters, which are, in turn, organized into subchapters. For example, in Chapter 12, “ADD Medication Myths and Facts,” Sterling cites six myths, such as “ADD Medications are Stimulants” and “Taking ADD Medications Leads to Addiction Vulnerabilities.” The titles of associated subchapters serve as helpful references to their contents.

Sterling’s effort to find a workable balance between the presentation of hard science and accessibility for the layperson is marginally successful. This fault is easy to forgive, however, because the nonscientifically-minded person can still be rewarded by Sterling’s lighthearted and ultimately satisfying approach.

Patty Sutherland