



# IAAF Medical & Anti-Doping Department

Advisory Note – ADHD, 2014

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETICS FEDERATIONS

## **ADVISORY NOTE – ADHD**

### 1. What is ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)?

ADHD is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders in early childhood. This disorder is marked by characteristic behaviour – such as inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity – which are long-lasting and evident for at least six months.

Previously, diagnosis would occur around the age of seven. However, recent studies show that later diagnosis can be done, even into young adulthood. As these kind of symptoms are often shown in everybody at some stage in their lifetime, the guidelines for determining whether a person has ADHD are very precise, and ADHD expert clinicians use scales like DSM-IV-TR to ascertain diagnosis.

The frequency and severity of symptoms vary from person-to-person and, in adults, symptoms have most likely been present since childhood, and have affected the ability to function in daily life.

Usually, there are three principal types of ADHD:

#### **Predominantly Inattentive Type**

-  Fails to give close attention to details, or makes careless mistakes;
-  Has difficulty maintaining attention;
-  Does not appear to listen;
-  Struggles to follow through on instructions;
-  Has difficulty with organization;
-  Avoids or dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort;
-  Loses things;
-  Is easily distracted; and/ or
-  Is forgetful in daily activities.

#### **Predominantly Hyperactive/ Impulsive Type**

-  Fidgets with hands or feet, or squirms in chair;
-  Has difficulty remaining seated;
-  Runs about or climbs excessively;
-  Difficulty engaging in quiet activities;
-  Acts as if driven by a motor;
-  Talks excessively;
-  Blurts out answers before questions have been completed;
-  Difficulty waiting or taking turns; and/ or
-  Interrupts or intrudes upon others.

#### **Combined Type**

-  Individual meets both sets of inattention and hyperactive/ impulsive criteria.

### 2. How do you treat it?

Having this disorder will affect your daily life functions – from relationships to tasks proficiency. If you are diagnosed with ADHD, there are drugs that can be used to improve your attention, and ability to focus. However, if you practice sport, several of these prescribed drugs are stimulants (like methylphenidate or dextroamphetamine, for example), and will need to be approved as they are forbidden on an In-Competition basis, under the WADA Prohibited List. Correct diagnosis criteria must be met before you may start using these kinds of drugs, and you should be fully compliant with the prescribed dosage to protect your health.

### 3. When and how do you apply for an International Therapeutic Use Exemption?

If you are an athlete competing in national-level events, you should contact your national federation or NADO. If you are an athlete competing in an International-level event, as defined by the [List of International Competitions](#), or if you are on the [Registered Testing Pool](#), you must apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE), prior to using this prescribed drugs, and especially if you will be competing.

### 4. What are the applicable criteria the IAAF demands in order to grant a TUE?

If it is the first time you are applying for an IAAF TUE, you should present a full medical report, including:

-  Two distinct, sport-independent ADHD experts diagnoses (namely from Paediatricians, Psychiatrist and Neuropsychologist, or other specialized physicians) based on DSM-IV criteria or ICD-10, confirming the disorder;
-  Yearly follow-up by one ADHD expert; and
-  Other non-medical and medical reports can also be submitted as further information supporting the diagnosis disorder, such as:
  - a. Early diagnosis or reports stating symptoms of this disorder;
  - b. 3- to 4-month specialist physician reports during the initial stages of treatment whilst adapting treatment dosage

IAAF will grant you one year TUE upon duly receiving the medical report from these two distinct sport-independent ADHD experts, and will reissue every year upon re-application, and reception of the yearly follow-up report from one ADHD expert. A mandatory complete application is required every four years.