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Short communication

# Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in a 19th century children's book

Johannes Thome ... Kerrin A. Jacobs

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### Abstract

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a major mental disorder in children. Presently, its pathogenesis and treatment as well as its role in adult psychiatry are subjects of heated debate. As early as 1846, the typical symptoms of ADHD were described by Heinrich Hoffmann, a physician who later founded the first mental hospital in Frankfurt. Interestingly, his description was published in a children's book entitled "Struwwelpeter" which he had designed for his 3-year-old son Carl Philipp. The symptomatology is impressively depicted in the colourfully illustrated story of "Zappel-Philipp" ("Fidgety Philip"), probably the first written mention of ADHD by a medical professional. This clearly shows that the diagnosis of ADHD is not an "invention" of modern times.



## Keywords

Biography; Child and adolescent psychiatry; Freud; History of medicine; Psychopathology ; Psychostimulant

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