Student

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Attention Disorder or Not, Pills to Help in School

“All the news that’s fit to click”. This is the aphorism for the web version of the *New York Times* (Blodget, October 2007). While the printed version of the paper ranks third behind the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today,* its website stands firm as the most popular news site in America, accommodating an astonishing 30 million visitors monthly (Adams, January 2011). In the Health section of the website lies an article by a reporter named Alan Schwarz, which seems to ask the question, do the means justify the end? The article reports the accounts of several physicians who attest to the fact that economic situations in certain areas of the country force them to misdiagnose and prescribe medication to children who are struggling academically, and the parents of these children have succumb to and are elated to foster drug addicted scholars. For the individual seriously seeking relief from the torment of ADHD, this site does not offer a clear-cut remedy. In fact, the page itself is cluttered and somewhat distracting, the article based on one man’s perception of the problem, and the presence of valid support for the information given is menial.

Though *The New York Times* boasts “the most popular news site in America”, this by no means qualifies it as the best. The page itself is cluttered and somewhat distracting. Beneath the title of the article is displayed a photo of what looks to be a mother with her seemingly ill son; an obvious attempt to draw at the heart and capture the attention of the viewer. However, nestled snugly to the right of this photo is an advertisement for internet service, followed by a link to a social media news site. As Mr. Schwarz reports the staggering number of children diagnosed with ADHD in America the site tends to pull you away by offering insight into the real estate market and Bernie Madoff’s luxury penthouse. A more appropriate offering here would seem to be access to verify the author’s claims of the prevalence of the disorder.

The lead physician in this piece, Dr. Michael Anderson from Canton, Georgia, takes the position that society has decided that “it’s too expensive to modify the kid’s environment, so we have to modify the kid” (Schwarz, October 2012). This is sort of a broad assumption, considering he presents no census on which to base his stance. The article does offer the experiences of a few doctors who ultimately prescribe ADHD medications to children they believe to have simple learning disabilities; applying temporary rectification with lasting ramifications. But there is no accessible research or statistics to verify that this is the norm of society. Are these the people left to monitor the health and wellness of the children today? In an attempt to substantiate the report, the website offers access to what is labeled “Reader’s Comments”. The remarks posted represent less than one one-thousandth of a percent of the children diagnosed with ADHD in 2007. Better suited here might be a link to facts, statistics, treatment options, or some government agency with validated structure.

After the initial stampede of variances, the webpage allows a brief moment to relax and focus; no ads, just article. In this area enters a family of four children and a variety of what the Drug Enforcement Administration classifies as Schedule II Controlled Substances. Adderall, Risperdal, and Concerta are the medications prescribed with the intent of achieving better academic performance. Mr. Schwarz informs that these drugs are very addictive and the long term effects not well understood. With that report should there not also be a provision immediately made to investigate the details of the drug, or at least the DEA’s reason for classifying them as they have? *The New York Times* webpage makes it easier to register for an online degree, sign up for cable through Time Warner, or reach out to a Facebook friend than it is to find treatment options for a child legitimately suffering with ADHD.

The article presented here raises a few questions. Is this truly a normal procedure for physicians nationally? Of the more than five million children diagnosed with ADHD in 2007, how many were misdiagnosed? Can you still save fifteen percent by switching your car insurance to Geico? *The New York Times* webpage covers an array of topics from travel to technology, from science to style; all easily accessible with trinkets of each clustered in a confined space as the task becomes to focus on the small screen at your front. Perhaps the chore of the day would be to peruse the Gulf Coast for the latest on the Exxon oil spill. Or you may want an exact count of the death toll in Somalia. But due to the numerous distractions, the overly opinionated reporting, and the lack of substantial facts this would not rate high on the list of suggested reading to help remedy the prevalence of a documented brain disorder in the home, in the country, and in the world.

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