How many of us haven't concealed our indignation seeing children running wild and causing havoc in public places? 'Naughty, spoilt brat!' is the usual first reaction. There might be a grain of truth in this comment, but in many cases such hyperactivity is beyond the child's control. They are unable to suppress their impulses and control their behaviour like an average person. What can account for such conduct? Account for it, it must be stressed, not excuse it. ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - a medical condition affecting a large proportion of the population, and not exclusively, as it turns out, children.

Basically, ADHD is a brain-based condition characterized by poor attention and distractibility and/or hyperactive and impulsive behaviour. This "and/or" is vital in distinguishing between various types of this disorder. Three types exist: a predominantly inattentive one without impulsive behaviour which is also known as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), and finally, combined type, with both inattentive and hyperactive symptoms. The exact cause of this disorder has not been determined yet, but it is thought to have a genetic background. Currently, scientists are trying to find genes which may make someone more susceptible to ADHD.

People with ADHD behave the way that they do because they have key differences in the frontal lobes of their brains, the parts which play an important role in the way we control our impulses. They find it difficult to suppress those impulses so they react to more cues than an average person. They are unable to stop and think of the consequences of their actions and "apply the brakes".

ADHD begins in childhood. Studies show that it becomes evident among 3.5% of children of preschool and school age, but it often lasts...
into adolescence and adulthood, especially if it is not diagnosed and treated. Boys are three times more likely to be diagnosed as compared to girls, because girls tend to manifest more of the inattentive symptoms, while boys are more often hyperactive and impulsive. Danish researchers have recently discovered that premature babies are also more likely to suffer from ADHD. Others claim that smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol during pregnancy or the exposure of unborn children to high levels of lead may lead to ADHD, too.

How do we recognize a person with ADHD? They usually demonstrate one or more of the following symptoms, to a greater or lesser extent:

- **Hyperactivity** - they seem to be constantly on the go, they keep have difficulty keeping appointments and organizing themselves, they are forgetful and often late. Owing to that, they might have problems at work and are perceived as disorganized employees, which in turn results in their own low self-esteem. The problems are not limited to work; they also have difficulty maintaining long-term relationships.

Are there any grounds for optimism? Although people with ADHD face problems with adapting and are often labelled as lazy, unmotivated, and troublesome, they can prove assets in some jobs which require creativity and originality. They tend to be adventurous and are not afraid to take risks, which can come in handy, for example in the case of businessmen considering some kind of investment.

If you remember your schooldays, there must have been at least one person in the classroom, constantly distracting him/herself and others and disrupting the teacher.

Fidgeting and have difficulty sitting still and find it difficult to stop talking.

- **Impulsiveness** - they act before thinking, tend to interrupt others, find it hard to wait their turn and blurt out responses.

- **Inattention** - they have difficulty concentrating, and are easily distracted by irrelevant sights and sounds, they tend to shift from one activity to another, and find it hard to finish the task they have started, they tend to forget things frequently and seem absent-minded.

These symptoms are usually associated with children. If you remember your schooldays, there must have been at least one person in the classroom, constantly distracting him/herself and others and disrupting the teacher. However, ADHD may persist into adolescence and even adulthood, but many adults do not find the name for their condition. Hyperactive behaviour might lessen as an individual ages and other symptoms might become more prevalent. Adult ADHD sufferers

ADHD sufferers usually think outside the box and their ideas can easily bewilder more conventionally thinking members of a team. If we look at the names of outstanding personalities in the realm of arts, sport, business and politics, and science, a large proportion of them is speculated as having ADHD, including: Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, W.A. Mozart, Sisters Bronte, George Bernard Shaw, Michael Jordan, Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Winston Churchill, John Kennedy, to name just a few. Hence, ADHD does not rule out genius!

No cure has yet been discovered for ADHD, but many treatment approaches exist. Doctors usually prescribe stimulant medications, which alleviate the symptoms. Some claim that these drugs are overused and opt for psychological counselling, which enables the sufferer to process their feelings and develop strategies of coping with the symptoms. It is ideal when psychotherapy is combined with parent training and use of support groups bringing together people.
with similar problems. Psychologists claim that the best base for treatment is at home, therefore, in order to help children with ADHD, their parents ought to set up clear house rules and consistent expectations, with a transparent reward and punishment system, and organize their house so that there are specific fixed places designated for eating, doing homework, or keeping toys. They also ought to remember to set up a daily schedule as this provides predictability and helps children structure their day. Nothing revolutionary, grandmother’s tips which apply to every family, not only ones afflicted with ADHD. Yet, some adults tend to forget about these simple pieces of advice. Isn’t it more convenient to go to a doctor and ask for a medical certificate that can serve as an excuse for a child’s misbehaviour, learning difficulties or aggression? There are not many disorders surrounded by such controversy as ADHD. Many question its legitimacy and the safety of the powerful medications used in its treatment. Similar to amphetamines, the most commonly prescribed Ritalin can cause insomnia and suppress the appetite, causing weight loss and stunted growth. There have even been reports of children becoming suicidal. Teachers and administrators also object to what they perceive as parents’ demands for different or lower standards. While ADHD is over-diagnosed by some practitioners, it tends to be under-identified in minority populations and children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Some parents might become too quick to blame behavioural or social problems on ADHD, using it as a scapegoat to avoid their responsibilities; however, the problem should not be overlooked altogether, and this requires closer cooperation between parents, doctors and teachers; cooperation whose objective is to explain and support, and not to excuse.