



ADHDadultUK

ANNUAL STATE OF THE NATION SURVEY

2024

www.adhdadult.uk

Index

Foreword	2
Key Findings	3
Results	
Who took part in the survey?	4
How does ADHD impact daily life?	5
What did people say in their own words?	7
Trends in ADHD diagnosis	8
Trends in ADHD medication use and effectiveness	9
Use of non-pharmaceutical support approaches	11
Analysis of ADHD's impact on multiple domains of life	12
Stigma - receiving negative responses to ADHD	17
Key challenges faced by the ADHD community	18
Perceived understanding and support of ADHD in primary care	19
Perceived understanding and support of ADHD in specialist psychiatric teams	20
Summary and Recommendations	21

Associated Appendices (available on website)

Appendix I	Methodology
Appendix II	Full Thematic Analysis

Foreword

On behalf of ADHDadultUK, I am delighted to release our first annual 'State of the Nation' report. The trustees wish to extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the survey. Whether you shared your experiences or helped spread the word about the survey, your involvement has been invaluable in creating this comprehensive snapshot of the adult ADHD community in the UK. We are grateful to partner organisations who shared the survey, especially Daley Jones, and The ADHD Alliance, and to Laura Battley for assisting with designing the report.

Capturing the lived experiences of adults with ADHD is crucial for understanding the challenges, needs, and successes of our community. The survey results highlight the realities faced by individuals navigating life with ADHD in 2024, offering insights into the impacts on health, relationships, work, education, and more. Your voices help us advocate for improved awareness, resources, and support systems.

We hope this report will not only deepen public understanding of ADHD but also help drive meaningful change in healthcare, educational settings, and workplaces. By sharing these findings, we aim to inspire informed conversations and actions that create a more inclusive and supportive environment for adults with ADHD.

Thank you for being part of this important work.

Warm regards,

Professor James Brown.

Chair, ADHDadultUK.

Key Findings

- 1,440 survey responses were received and analysed between October 2024 and February 2025.
- Cluster analysis of responses to questions on the impact of ADHD on daily life identified three distinct profiles of those who participated in the survey:
 - *Profile 1: Severe challenges across all areas (41.1%).*
 - *Profile 2: Moderate challenges with mental health concerns (30.3%).*
 - *Profile 3: Significant challenges with severe mental health impacts (28.5%).*
- Thematic analysis of a subset of 756 responses to the open-ended question ‘Any further comments?’ identified five key areas of concern in respondents:
 - *Healthcare access and support challenges.*
 - *Workplace and educational support.*
 - *Social stigma and public perception.*
 - *Mental health and co-occurring conditions.*
 - *Lack of affordable ADHD management resources.*
- The majority of respondents (70.7%) reported that they perceived understanding of ADHD in primary care as being ‘Poor’ or worse.
- 76% of respondents reported receiving negative responses from people when disclosing their ADHD, with ‘Personal relationships’, ‘The workplace’, and ‘Public settings’ being the three most cited domains where negative responses were received.
- ‘Exercise, ‘Online resources, and ‘Mindfulness’ were the top three alternative ADHD management approaches survey respondents reported using.
- The biggest challenges reported by respondents were ‘Access to diagnostic assessments’, ‘Access to treatment/medication’, ‘Lack of public awareness/stigma’, and ‘Co-existing conditions’.

Results

Who Took Part in the Survey?

We received responses from 1,440 adults.

The gender distribution of respondents is shown in Figure 1, and the Age distribution is shown in Figure 2.

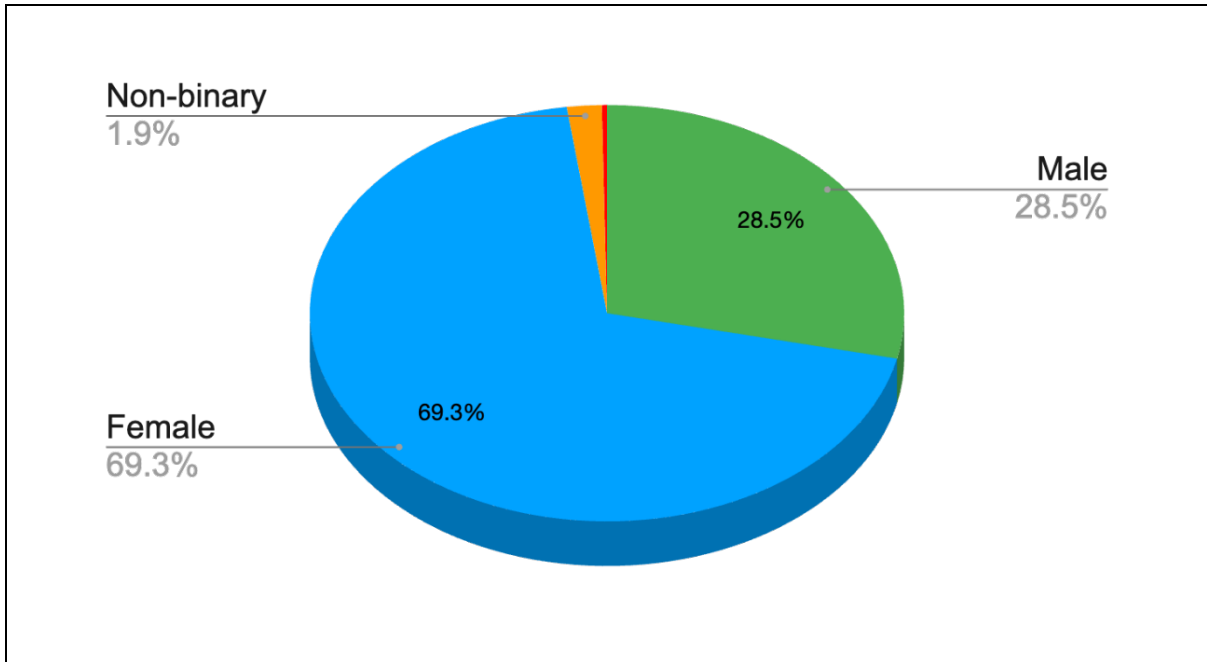


Figure 1: Gender distribution of survey respondents

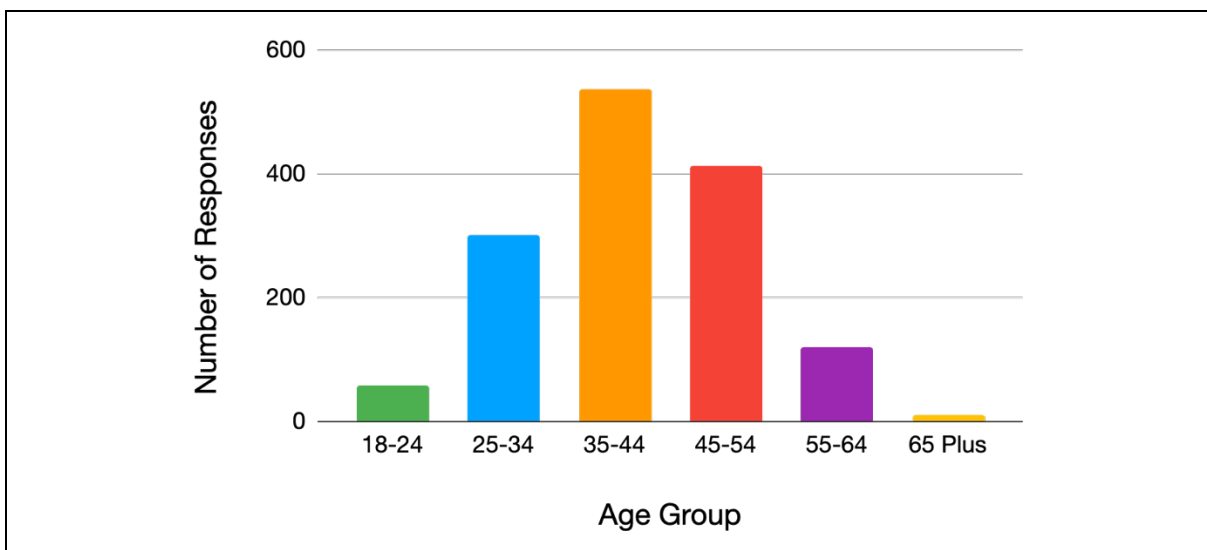


Figure 2: Age distribution of survey respondents

How does ADHD impact daily life?

We were able to cluster responses from the survey to identify three distinct profiles of people based on how they reported that ADHD affects different aspects of life (Table 1). These groups highlight the diverse experiences within the ADHD community (Table 2).

- *Profile 1: Severe challenges across all areas (41.1%)*
- *Profile 2: Moderate challenges with mental health concerns (30.3%)*
- *Profile 3: Significant challenges with severe mental health impacts (28.5%)*

Table 1: Characteristics of each profile			
	Impact		
Domain	Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3
Workplace functioning	Significant	Moderate	Significant
Family relationships	Severe	Moderate	Significant
Romantic relationships	Severe	Moderate	Significant
Mental health	Severe	Significant	Severe
Physical health	Significant	Moderate	Moderate
Daily functioning	Severe	Moderate	Significant
Financial health	Severe	Moderate	Significant

Table 2: Profiles of adults with ADHD based on challenges across life domains

Profile	Distinguishing Features	Key Differentiators
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences severe impacts in mental health, daily functioning, and financial health. Reports significant impacts in workplace functioning, family, and physical health. Likely the most affected group overall, with challenges permeating nearly every aspect of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This profile is marked by universal severity, with nearly every domain being impacted at significant or severe levels.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faces moderate impacts in most domains, including workplace functioning, family relationships, physical health, daily functioning, and financial health. Mental health challenges stand out as significant compared to other areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike the other profiles, this group has relatively balanced (moderate) challenges, suggesting they may manage well with existing resources or mild interventions.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports significant impacts across most domains, including workplace functioning, family and romantic relationships, and financial health. Severe mental health impacts set this profile apart, indicating a primary challenge in emotional well-being. Physical health is comparatively less affected (moderate impact). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While challenges are not uniformly severe (as in Profile 1), the severe mental health impact combined with significant challenges in other domains creates a distinct pattern.

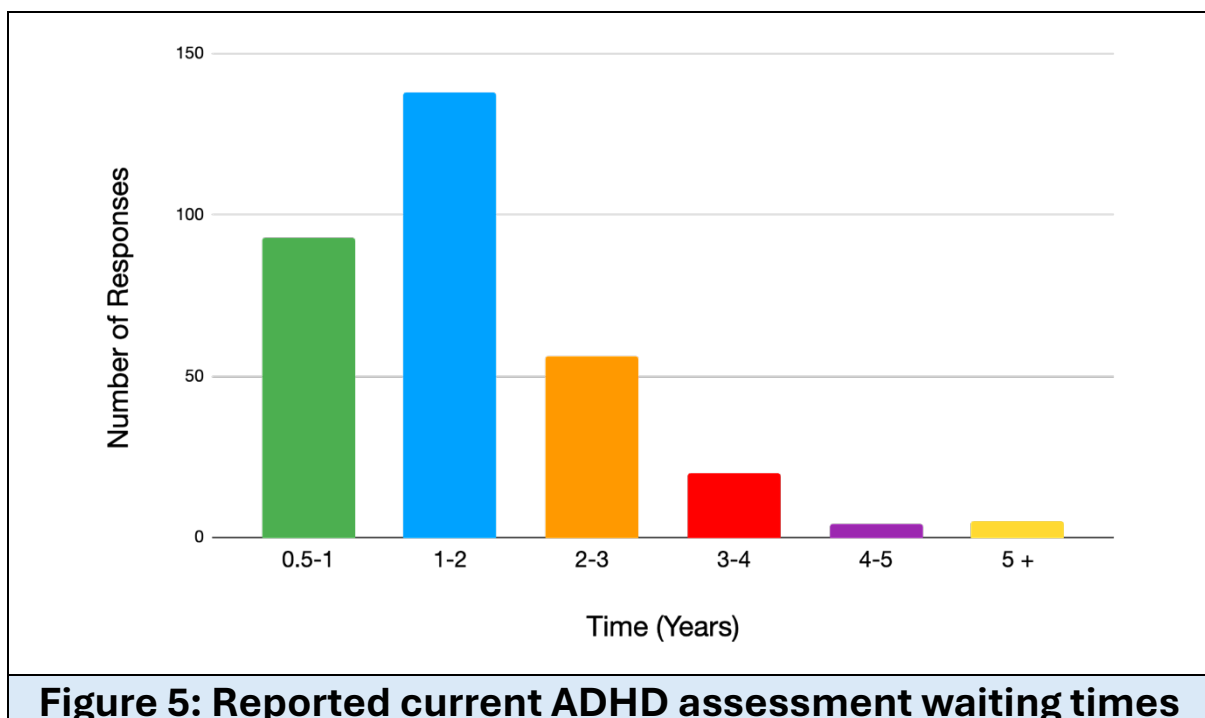
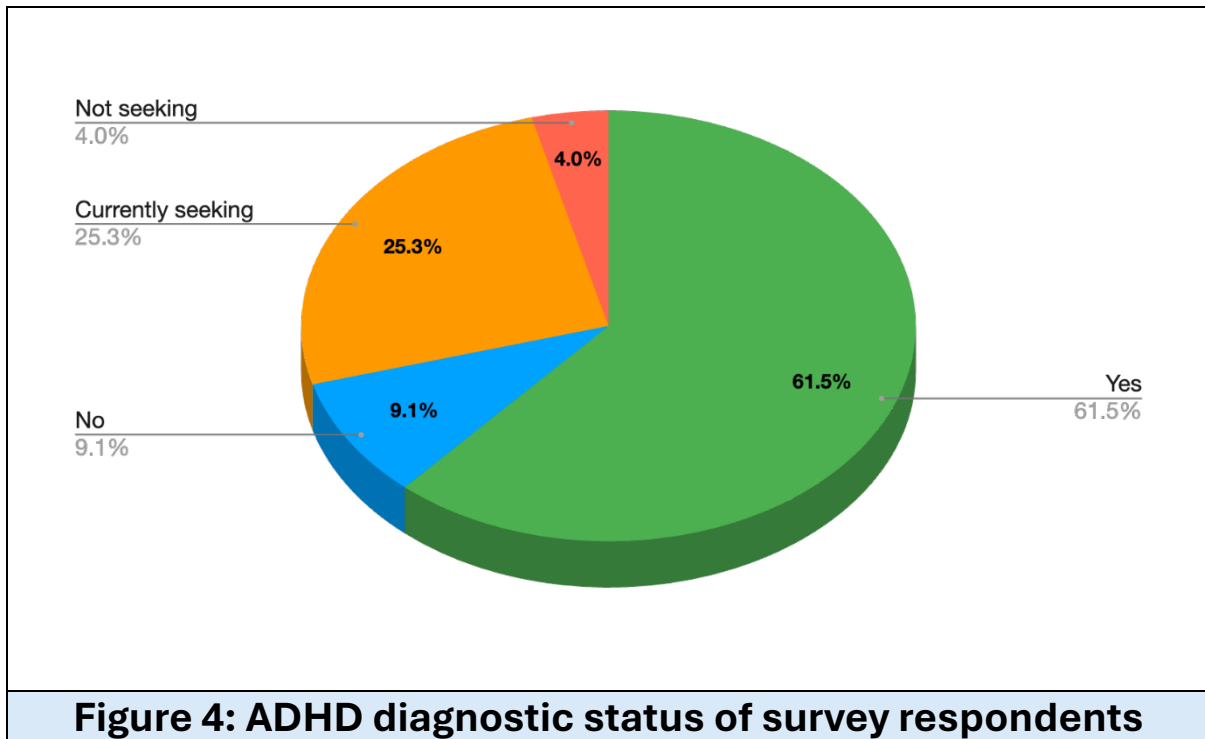
What did people say in their own words?

Out of 1,440 survey respondents, 756 people shared additional comments. We analysed these responses and identified several key themes.

Table 3: Key themes identified	
Issue	What we found
Challenges with healthcare access and support	Many adults with ADHD face long NHS waiting times for diagnosis and difficulties getting private diagnoses recognised, delaying access to care. Even after diagnosis, many feel lost and unsupported, with little guidance on managing their condition. Medication shortages further disrupt stability, making it harder for individuals to function in daily life.
Workplace and education struggles	Many adults with ADHD face a lack of workplace accommodations, leading to job instability, stress, and reduced productivity. Support in higher education is inconsistent, with postgraduate students often receiving little to no help. The transition from university to work is particularly challenging, as neither system adequately prepares individuals for managing ADHD in these environments.
The impact of stigma	Many adults with ADHD feel misunderstood or dismissed by healthcare professionals, employers, and even loved ones, leading to isolation and frustration. A lack of public awareness fuels stigma and misconceptions, highlighting the need for better education and advocacy. This stigma doesn't just impact individuals, but also affects families, workplaces, and society, limiting support and understanding.
Mental health and co-occurring conditions	Untreated or poorly managed ADHD can lead to mental health struggles including anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. It also increases the risk of substance use, eating disorders, and self-harm, adding to the challenges individuals face. These difficulties don't just affect the person with ADHD. They also impact families, workplaces, and communities, highlighting the need for better support and intervention.
The high cost of ADHD support	The high cost of private ADHD assessments, therapy, and coaching makes essential support inaccessible for many. As a result, many rely on peer-led support groups, which can provide valuable community help but often lack professional guidance, leaving gaps in care.
Trends in ADHD diagnosis and assessment	Most participants reported a formal ADHD diagnosis, while many are still waiting for an assessment. A smaller group is not currently pursuing a diagnosis.

Trends in ADHD diagnosis

Most participants reported a formal ADHD diagnosis, while many are still waiting for an assessment (Figure 4). Long waiting times remain a major barrier, with most respondents experiencing significant waiting times in accessing assessments (Figure 5).



Trends in ADHD medication use and effectiveness

The survey responses reveal insights into medication use among participants (see Figure 5) and also the types of medications used to manage ADHD symptoms.

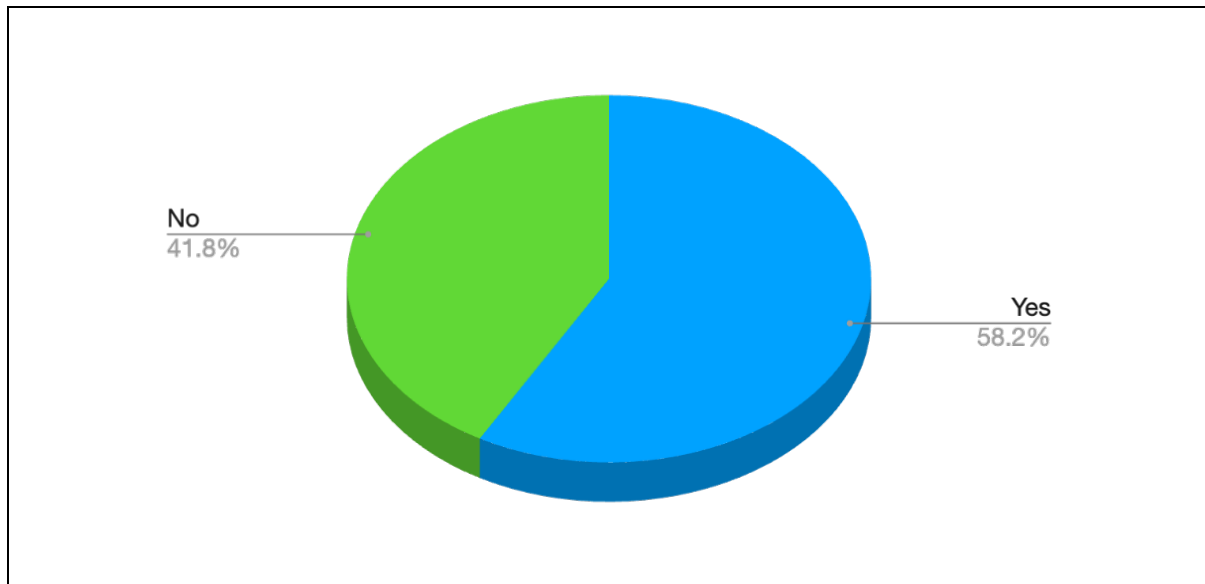


Figure 6: Use of ADHD medication among survey respondents

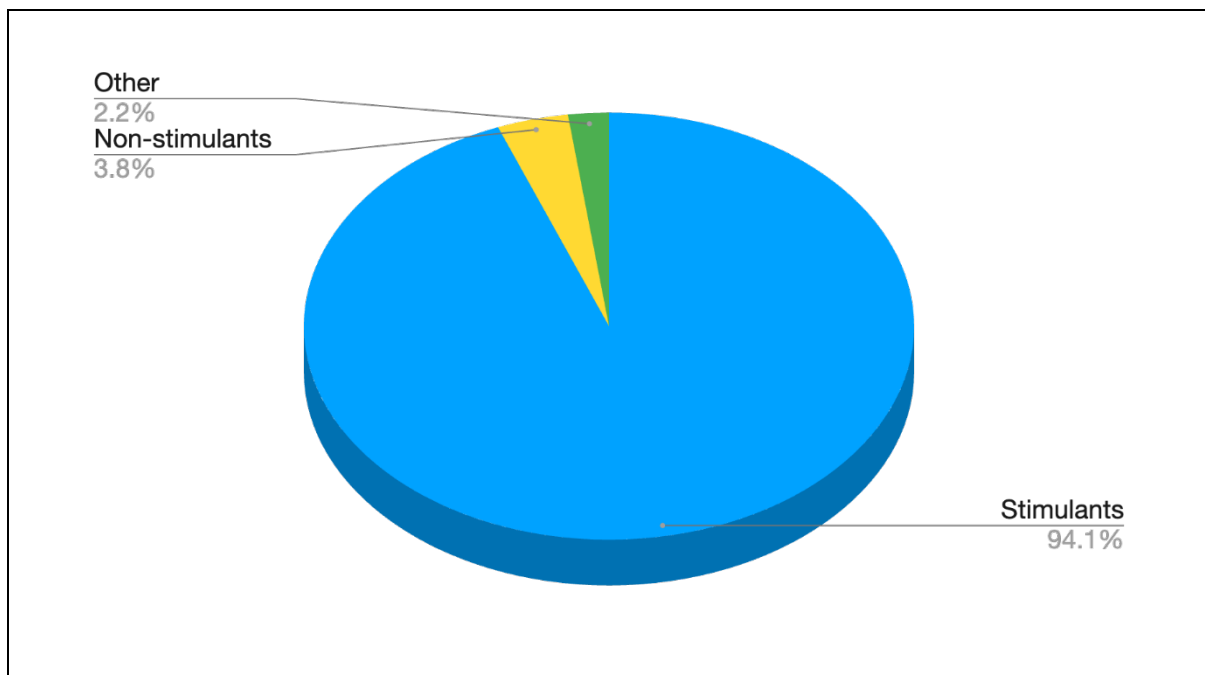
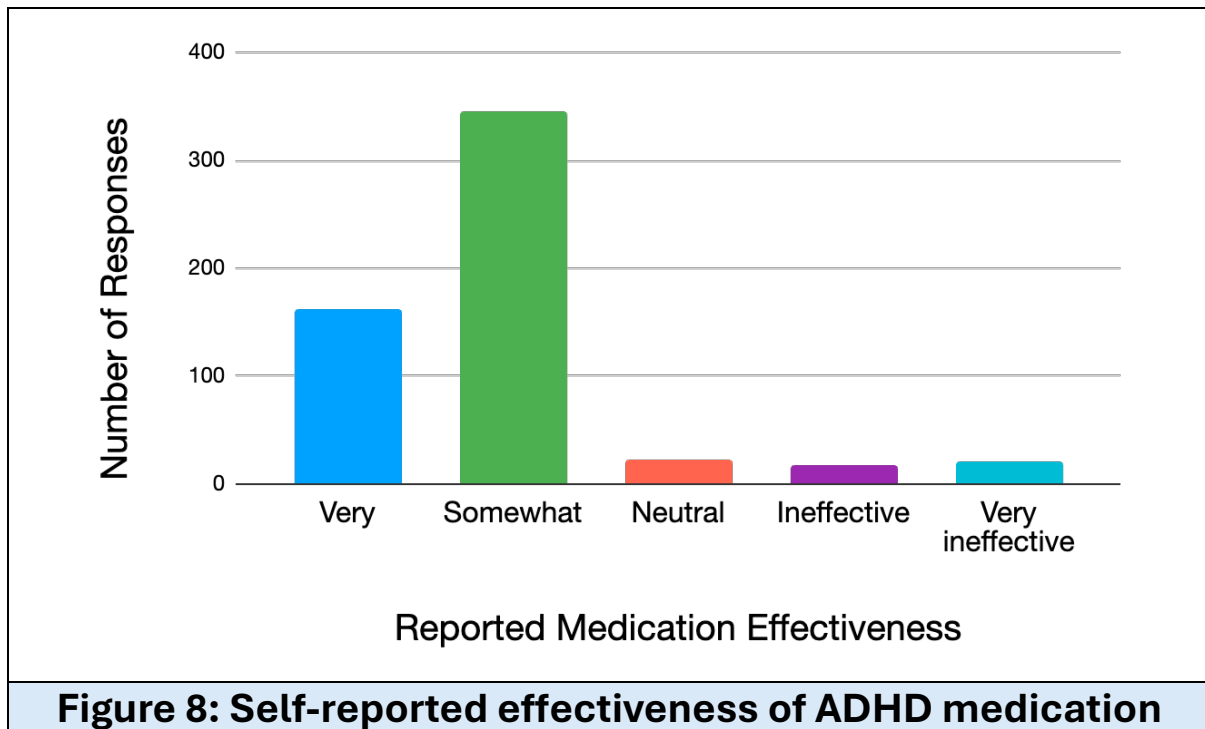


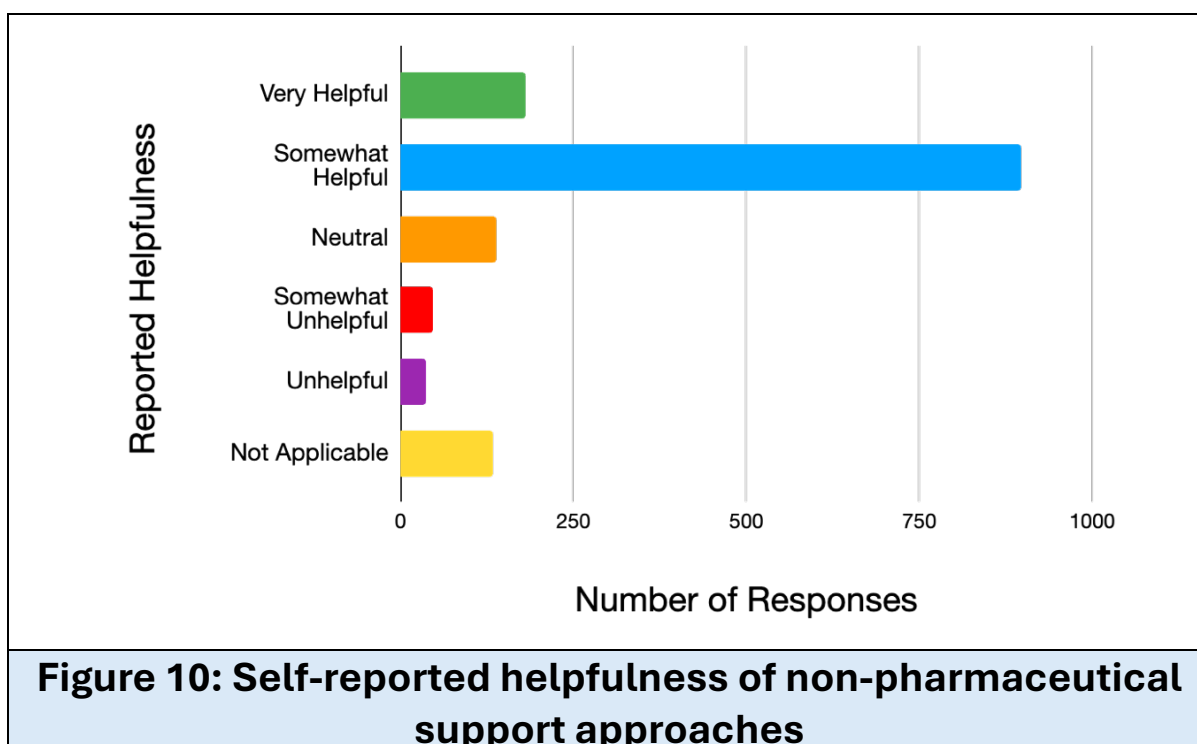
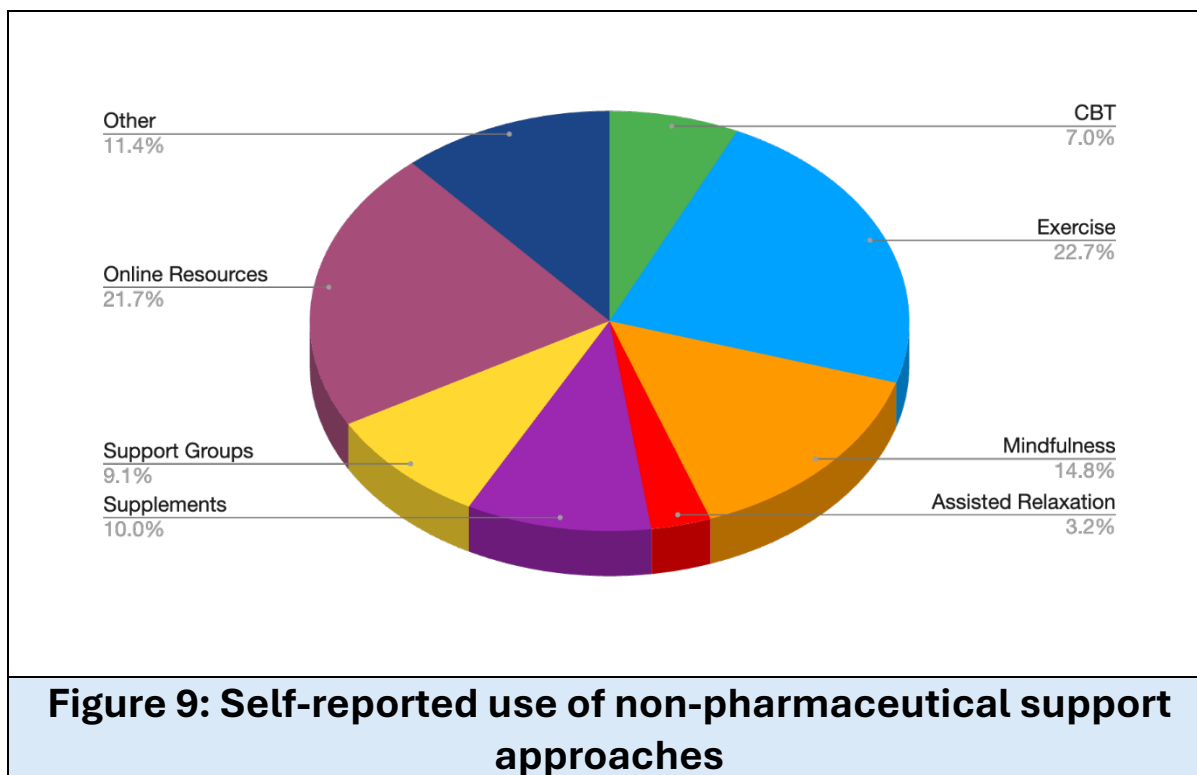
Figure 7: Types of ADHD medication used by survey respondents

Survey responses provide valuable insights into the perceived effectiveness of ADHD medications (see Figure 8).



Use of non-pharmaceutical support approaches

Survey responses revealed a broad range of non-pharmaceutical support approaches taken among participants (see Figure 9), with most people indicating a positive impact (Figure 10).



Analysis of ADHD's impact on multiple domains of life

Survey responses indicate that ADHD symptoms significantly affect many respondents' experiences in the workplace (see Figure 11), as well as their academic performance and experiences (Figure 12).

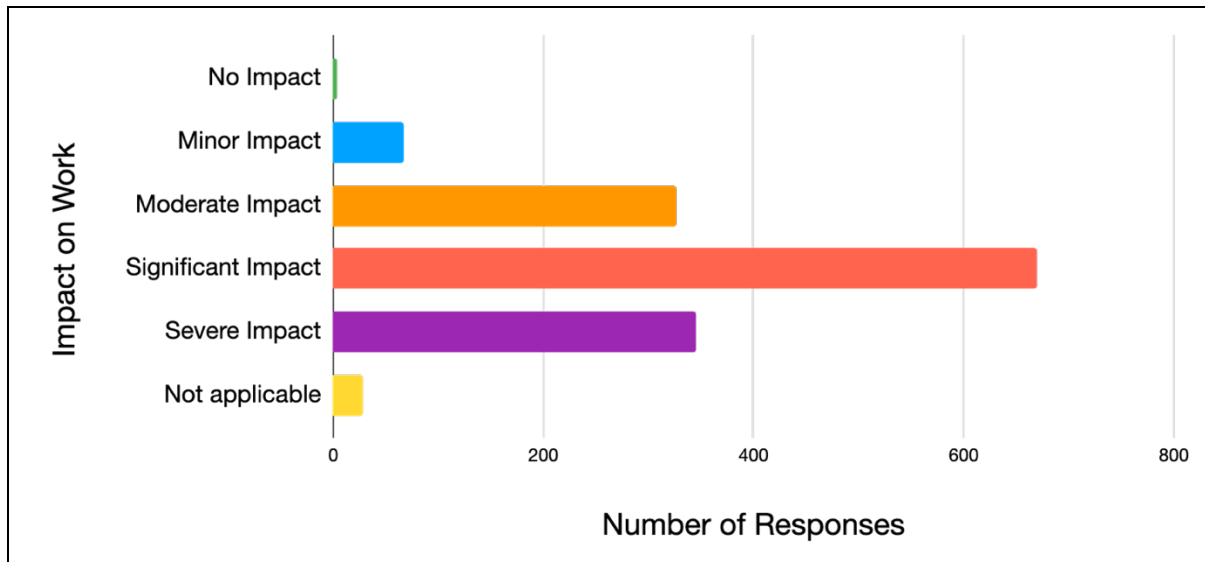


Figure 11: Perceived impact of ADHD in the workplace

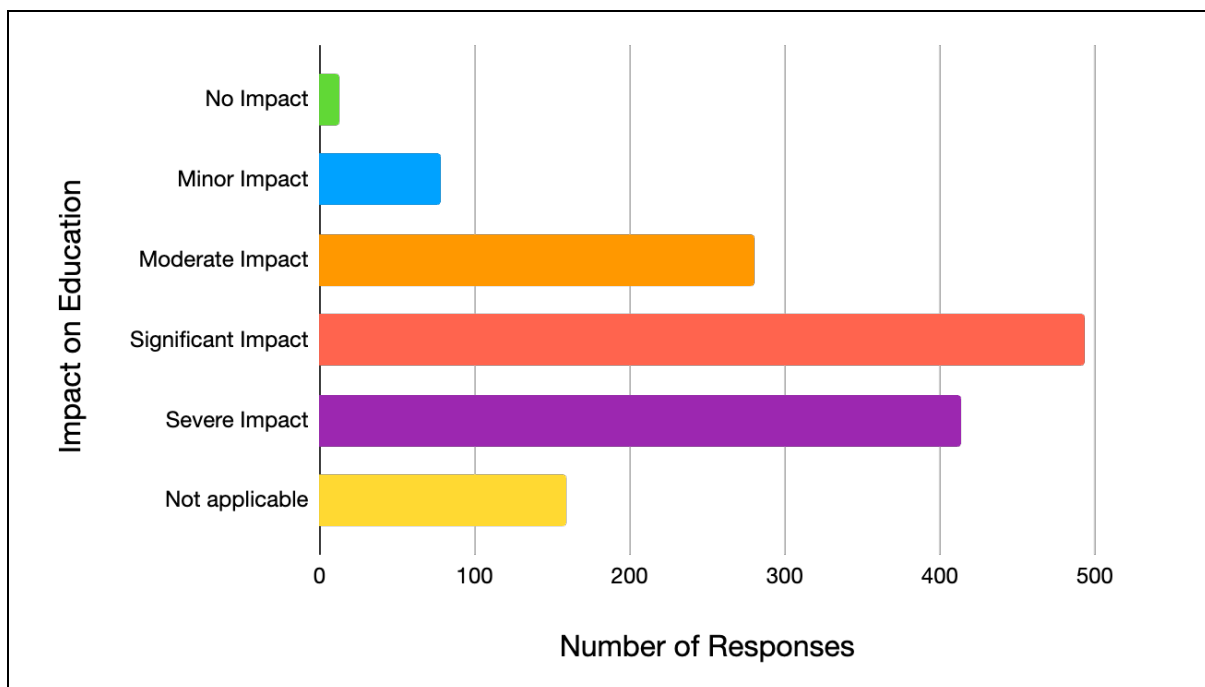


Figure 12: Perceived impact of ADHD on educational experiences

Survey responses also revealed that ADHD symptoms significantly affect romantic relationships (see Figure 13) and familial relationships (Figure 14).

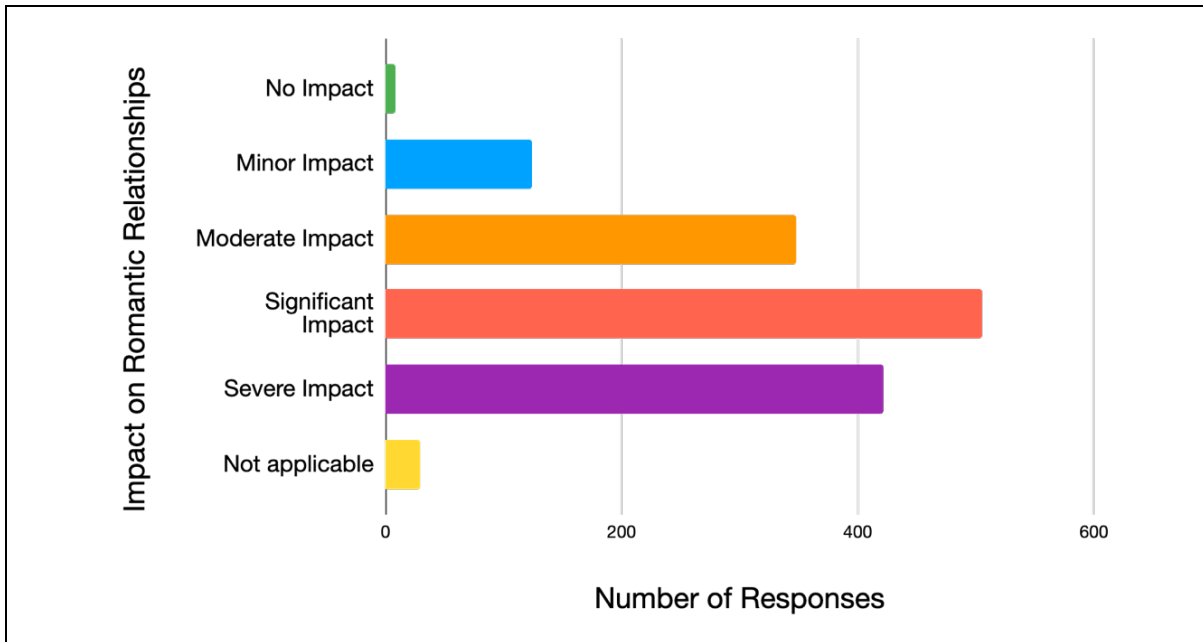


Figure 13: Perceived impact of ADHD on romantic relationships

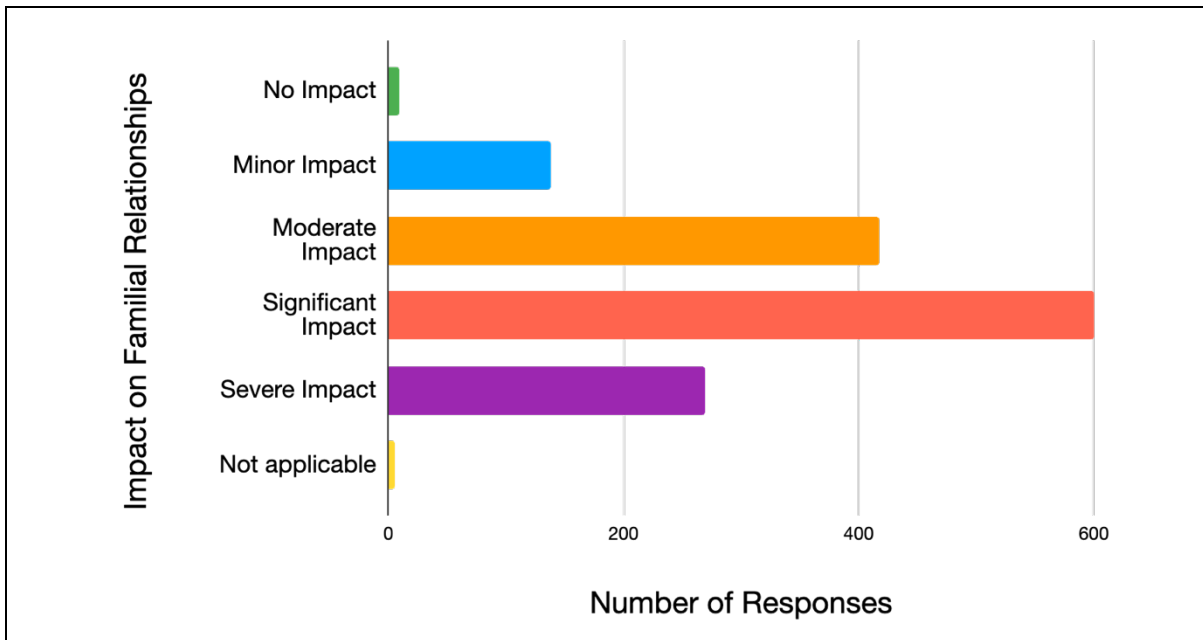


Figure 12: Perceived impact of ADHD on familial relationships

Perceived impact of ADHD on health

Survey responses reveal that ADHD symptoms significantly influence mental and physical health for many individuals (Figures 13 and 14).

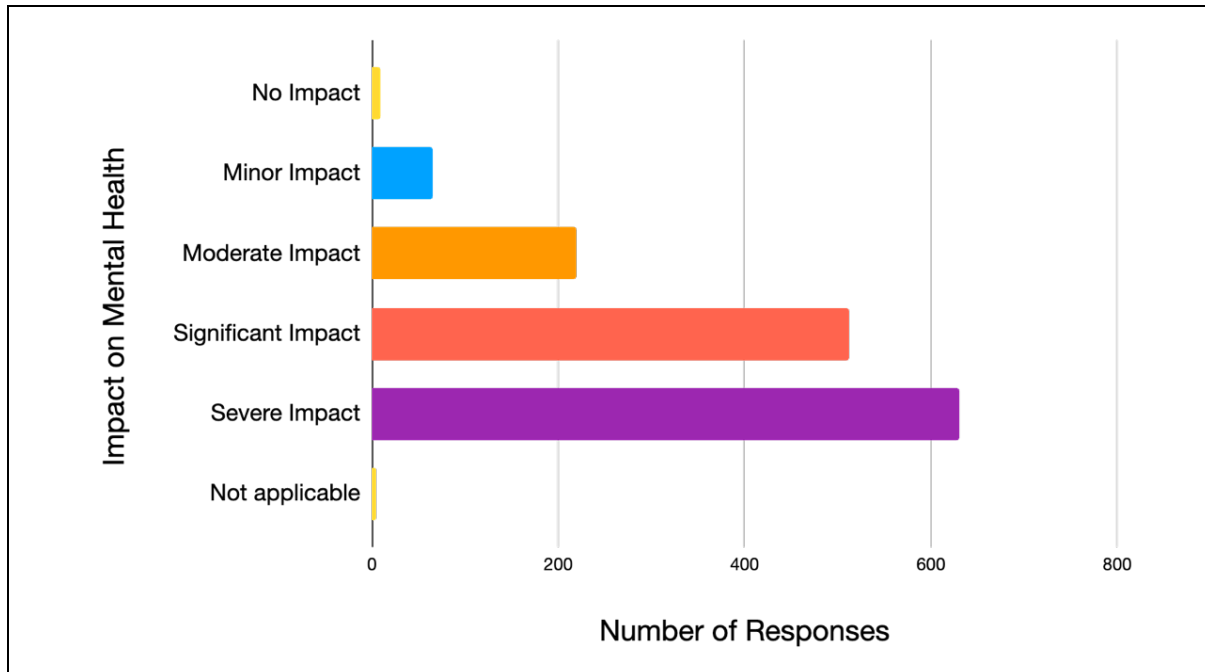


Figure 13: Perceived impact of ADHD on mental health

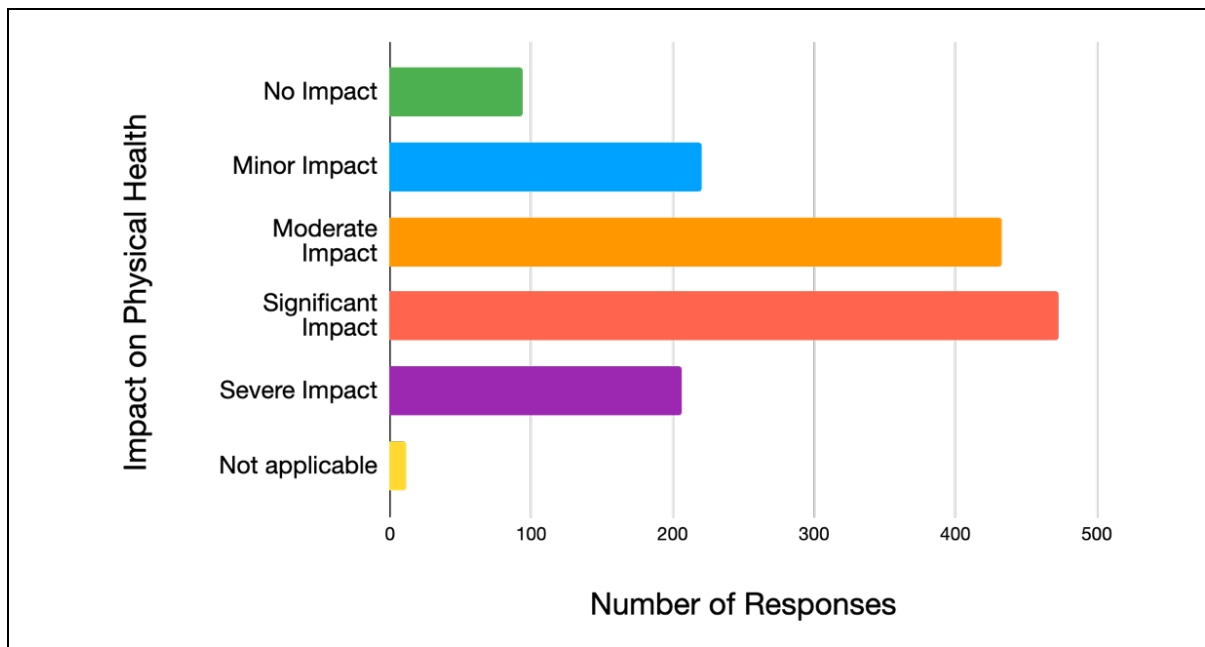
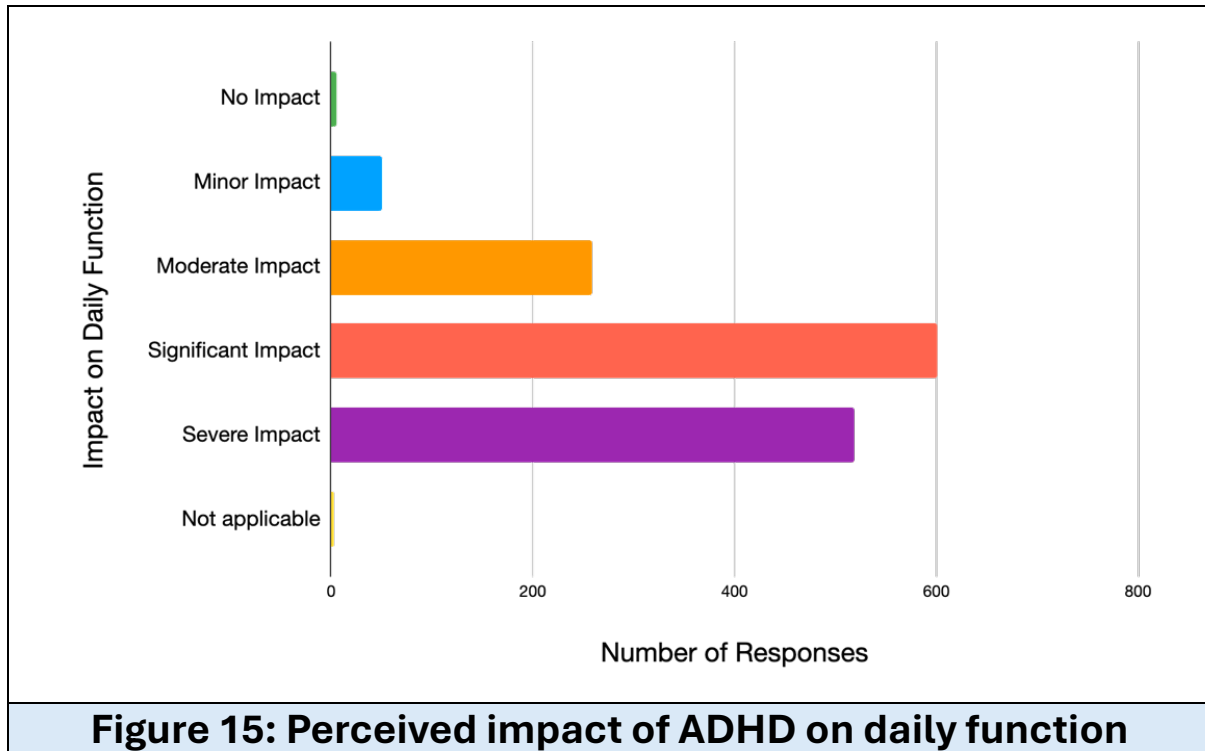


Figure 14: Perceived impact of ADHD on physical health

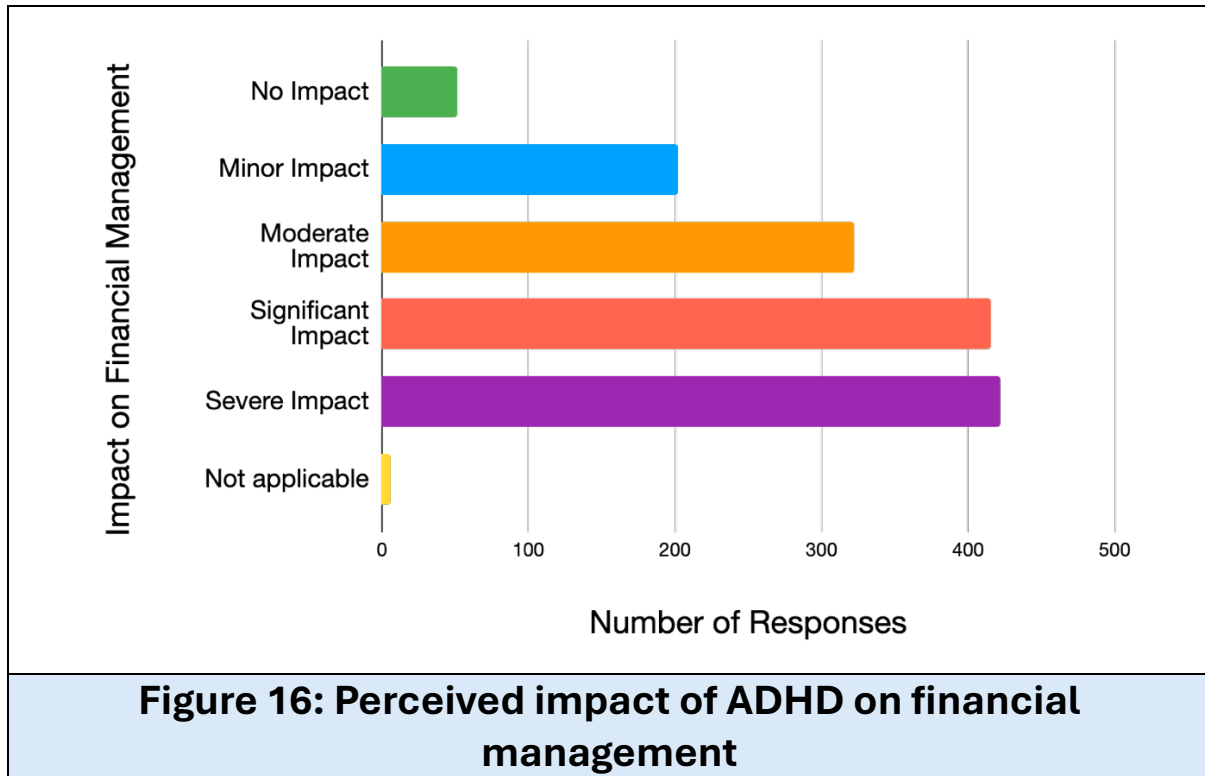
Perceived impact of ADHD on daily function

Survey responses reveal that ADHD symptoms profoundly affect daily functioning for the majority of individuals (Figure 15).



Perceived impact of ADHD on financial management

Survey responses reveal that ADHD symptoms have a marked impact on financial health for the majority of individuals, with many facing severe or significant challenges (Figure 16).



Stigma - receiving negative responses to ADHD

Survey responses highlight that negative responses to ADHD are a prevalent experience for most (see Figure 17). These negative responses occur in various contexts (Figure 18).

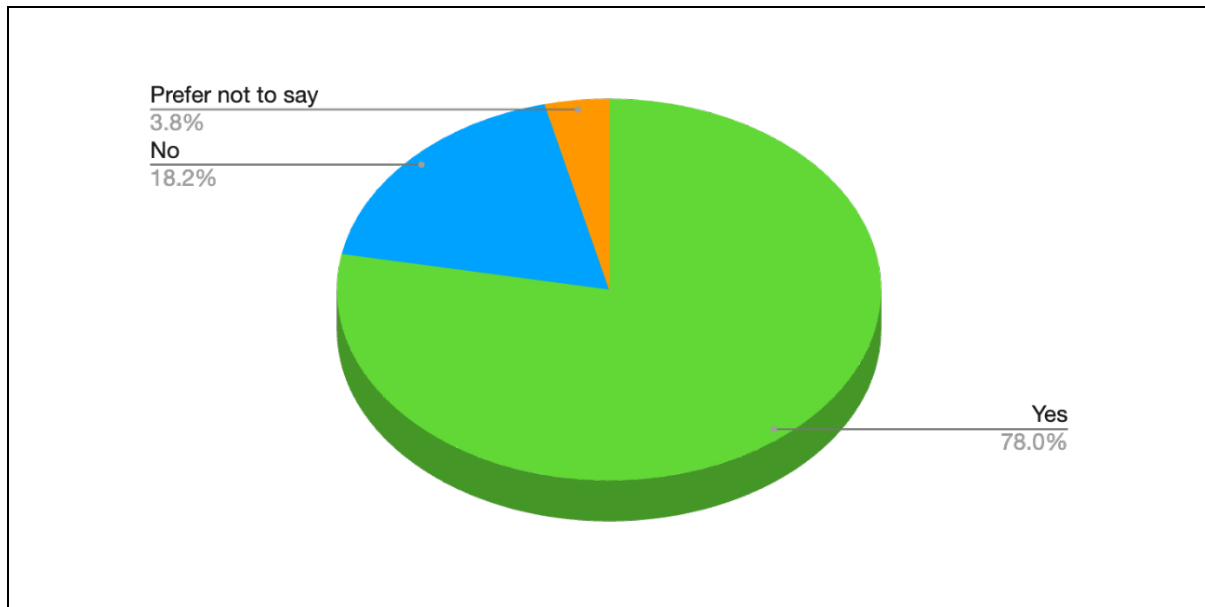


Figure 17: Reported experiences of receiving negative responses related to ADHD

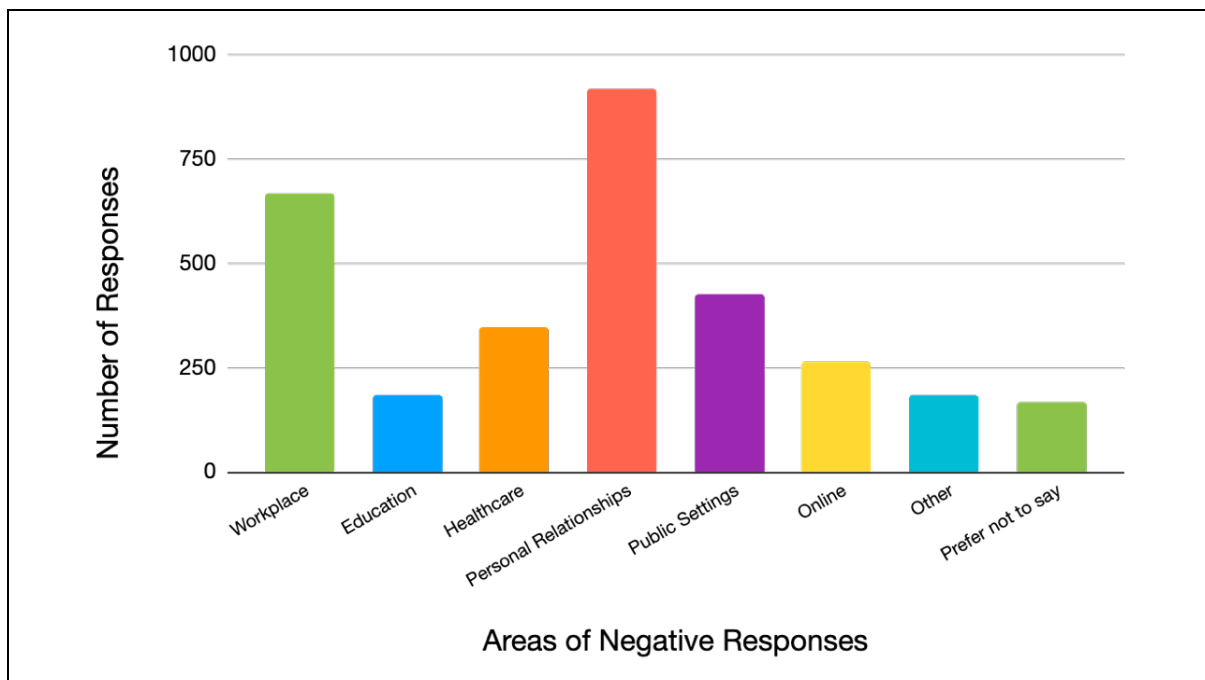


Figure 18: Sources of negative responses experienced by survey respondents related to ADHD

Key challenges faced by the ADHD community

Survey responses reveal a strong consensus on the most significant challenges facing adults with ADHD, with systemic barriers to diagnosis and treatment emerging as dominant themes (see Figure 19).

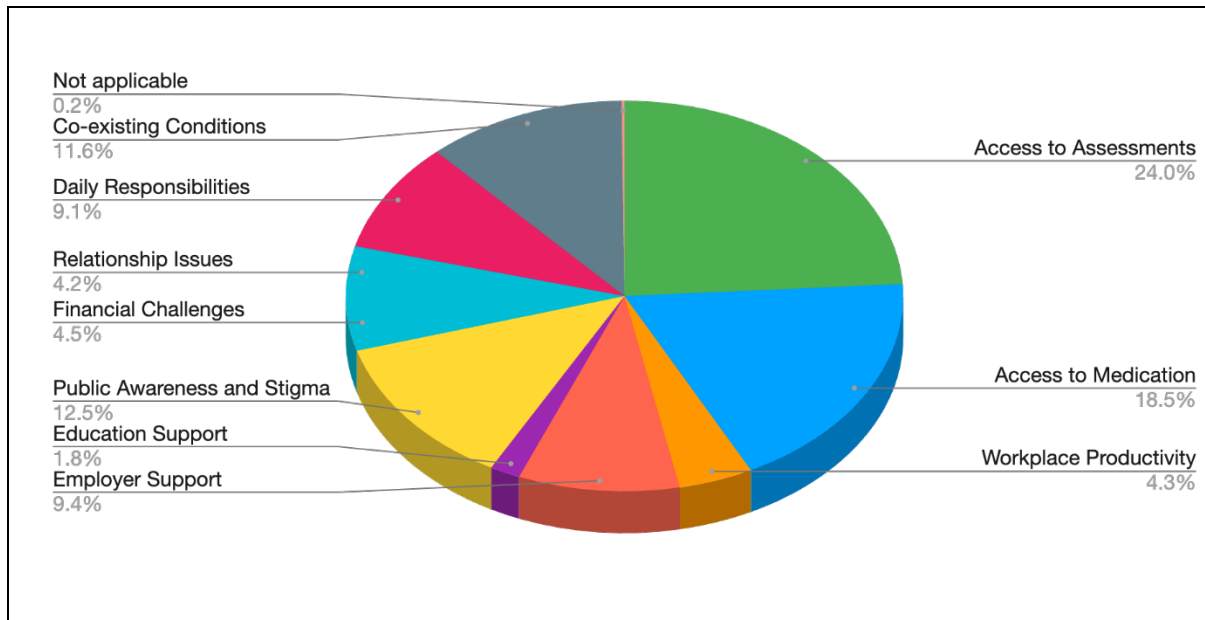


Figure 19: Key challenges faced by the ADHD community as reported by survey respondents

Perceived understanding and support of ADHD in primary care

Responses around support and understanding in primary care highlight significant dissatisfaction among respondents regarding the understanding and support provided by primary care professionals (Figures 20 and 21).

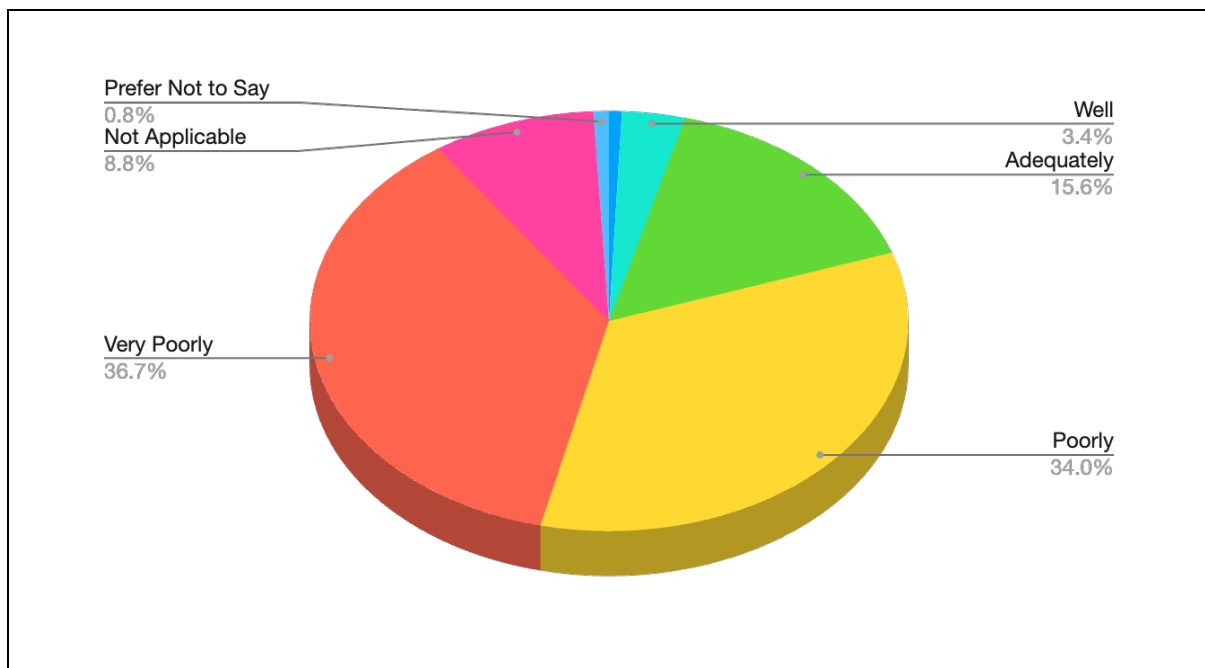


Figure 20: Perceived level of understanding of adult ADHD in primary care

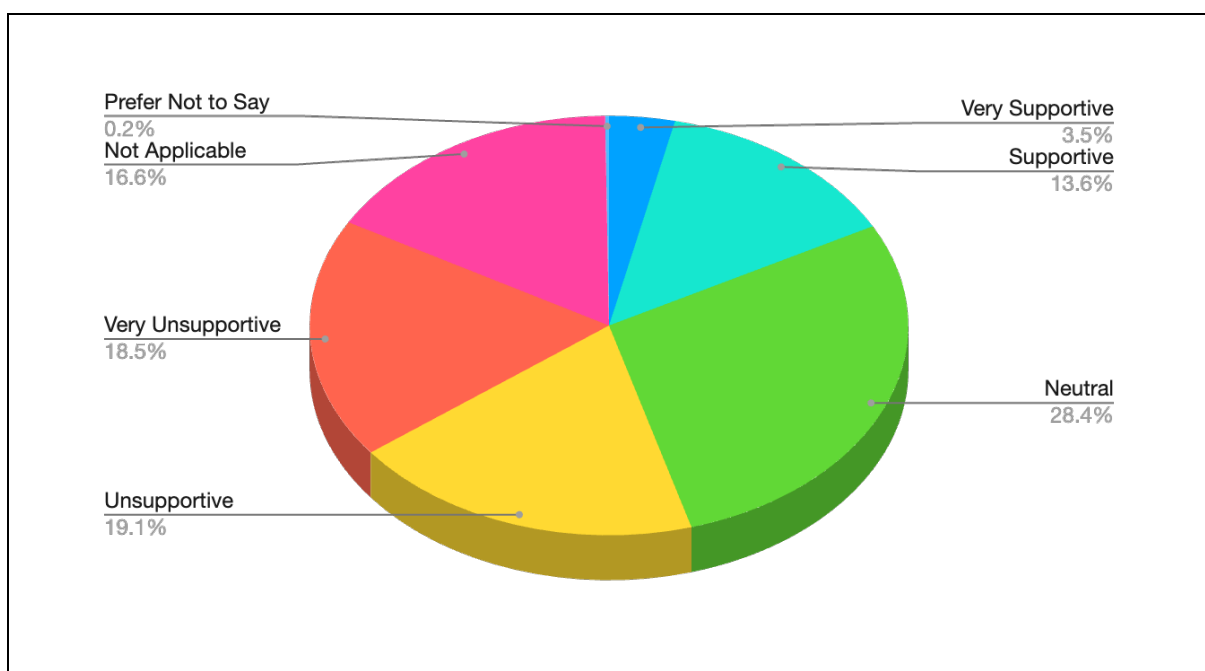


Figure 21: Perceived level of support for adult ADHD in primary care

Perceived understanding and support of ADHD in specialist psychiatric teams

Responses around support and understanding in specialist care highlight a more positive experience among respondents (Figures 22 and 23).

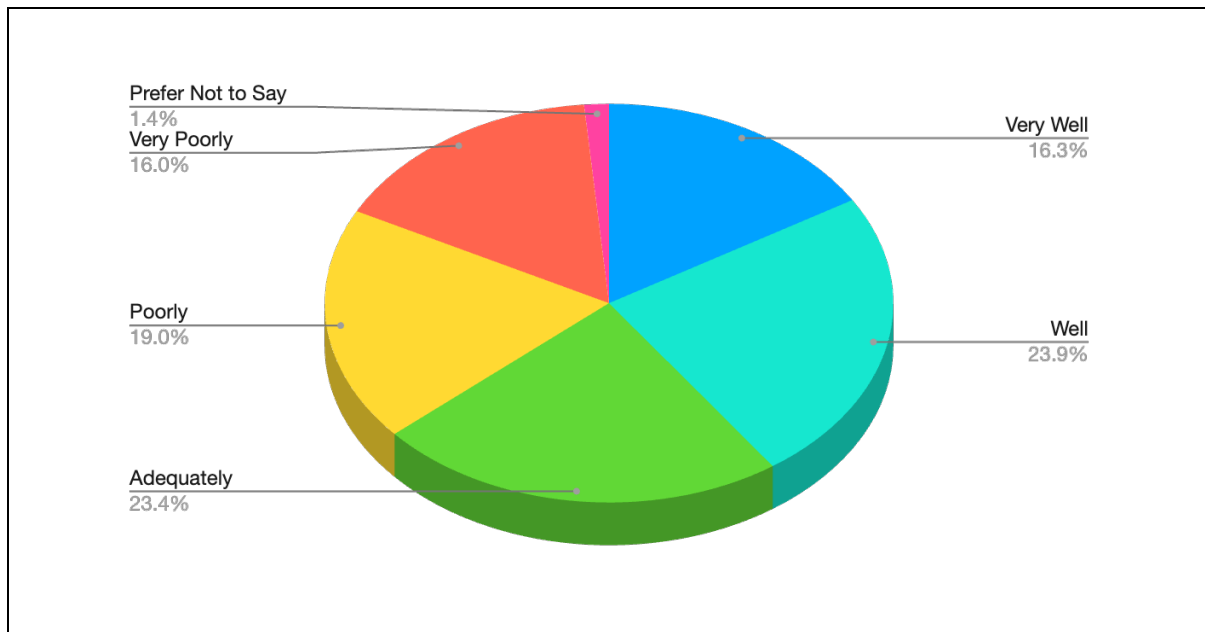


Figure 22: Perceived level of understanding of adult ADHD in specialist psychiatric teams

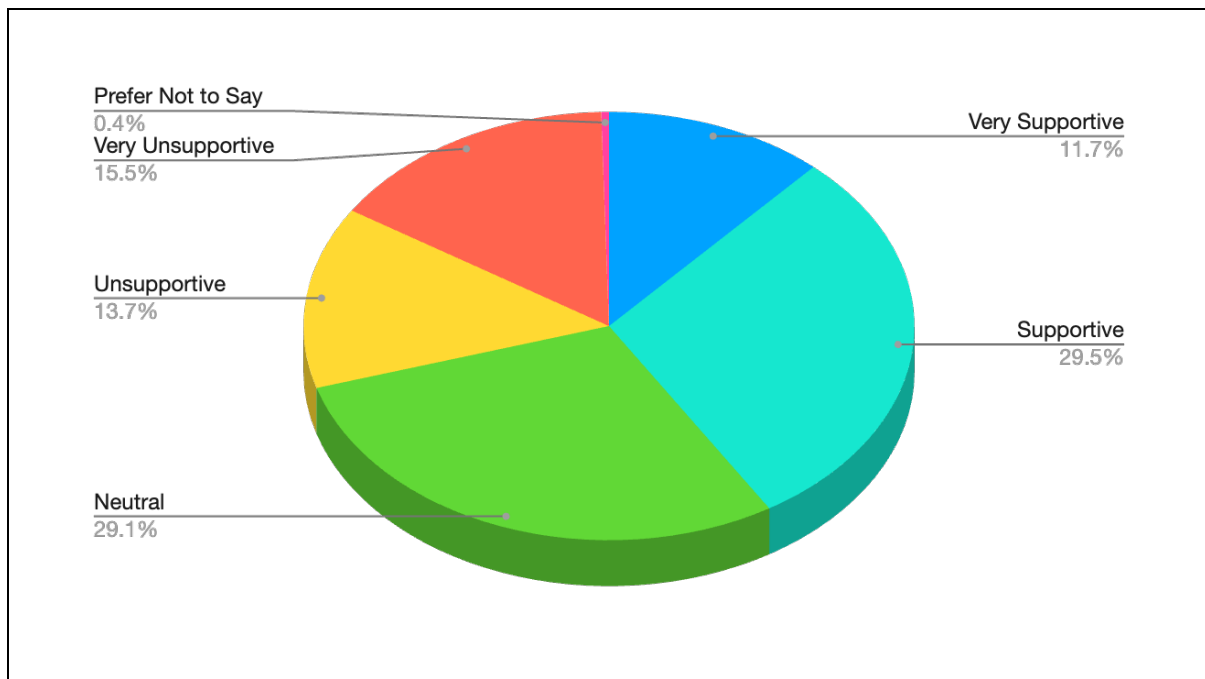


Figure 23: Perceived level of support of adult ADHD in specialist psychiatric teams

Summary and Recommendations

The inaugural ADHDadultUK 2024 State of the Nation survey is a groundbreaking exploration of the lived experiences of adults with ADHD in the UK, providing vital insights into their challenges and triumphs. The survey's findings underscore the urgent need to address systemic gaps in healthcare, education, and societal understanding of adult ADHD.

At the heart of the findings is the stark reality of healthcare inadequacies. Over 70% of respondents rated understanding of ADHD in primary care as poor or worse, with lengthy NHS diagnostic waiting times compounding the issue.

For many, receiving a diagnosis is merely the beginning of a frustrating journey. Post-diagnosis support is inconsistent. Disruption to medical supplies destabilises lives. These gaps in care highlight the pressing need for reform.

The results of this survey highlight that severe mental health impacts are common among adults with ADHD, particularly in those facing barriers to treatment. This demands urgent action. It is imperative that healthcare providers prioritise integrated support systems to address the multifaceted nature of ADHD.

Equally troubling is the pervasiveness of stigma around ADHD. Over three-quarters of respondents reported negative reactions when disclosing their ADHD. The ripple effects of stigma extend beyond personal relationships, undermining workplace inclusion and public awareness. This social misunderstanding creates an isolating environment, discouraging individuals from seeking help and perpetuating myths about ADHD.

There is a clear mandate for society to do better. Public education campaigns must become a priority, challenging stereotypes and fostering empathy for individuals navigating life with ADHD.

The findings also highlight the broader impact of ADHD on daily life. Financial instability, workplace challenges, and significant disruptions to relationships are daily realities for many adults with ADHD. These struggles are compounded by the high cost of managing the condition, which places effective treatment beyond the reach of those on lower incomes.

Respondents' reliance on community-led support networks underscores the critical role of peer-driven resources, but these efforts cannot replace the need for accessible professional care.

Despite these challenges, the survey offers hope. Many respondents reported effective ADHD management through medication, and alternative strategies such as mindfulness and exercise. These insights provide a roadmap for tailored interventions, underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to ADHD management that integrates mental health care, workplace accommodations, and accessible support resources.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the survey. We did not collect sufficient geographical data to calculate deprivation, we did not gather data on ethnicity, and there were unequal distributions of gender and geographical area.

Despite this, the 2024 ADHDadultUK 'State of the Nation' report is a call for action. The barriers to diagnosis, treatment, and societal acceptance of ADHD are not just individual struggles but systemic failures that demand collective accountability.

The survey findings have illuminated a path forward, but it is now up to policymakers, healthcare providers, and society at large to listen, learn, and act. With the right investments in awareness, accessibility, and support, the lives of adults with ADHD can be transformed; their potential, too often overlooked, can be fully realised.



ADHDadultUK

**A charity for adults with
ADHD, run by adults with
ADHD.**

www.adhdadult.uk