

# UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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**SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
PHARMACY**

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January 15, 2006

The Principal

.....Primary School

Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST TO ADVERTISE THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PRESCRIBING OF METHYLPHENIDATE, RITALIN® FOR ATTENTION DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a developmental disorder, which affects between 2% and 5% of primary school children. It consists of problems with impulse control, attention span, and activity level. However, it is much more than a matter of being inattentive and overactive. The disorder is an obstacle to benefit from normal educational methods and to form acceptable social relations. It is not a temporary state that will be outgrown, for most of the children could still be suffering from the disorder as adolescents and adults.

The child usually disorganised, has problems with planning his/her activities and may be very forgetful. There are severe problems with sustained attention, especially in the classroom situation. The child has also problems with sitting still, is overactive and fidgety. Problems with gross and fine motor co-ordination are frequent.

The cause of ADHD is not known yet, but research suggests a genetic origin. Pollutants and poor nutrition may also play a role. It is not caused by a failure to discipline or control the child.

If ADHD children are not diagnosed and treated at an early age they are at risk for the future delinquent behaviour, psychiatric problems and substance abuse. The financial costs for the society will be considerable. The families of these children experience undue stress and it has severe impact on academic activities at schools.

## Appendix D: Letter to the Principals

The purpose of the study is to determine the factors that influenced the prescribing and use of methylphenidate for ADHD in primary schools in Polokwane.

This is an approved departmental research project of the University of Limpopo in collaboration with the University of Oslo, Norway. The Superintendent General of Education of Limpopo Province has granted permission. Ms BC Coetzee (MSc Student) from the University of Limpopo will conduct this study.

The data will be used for statistical analysis only and in no circumstances will the identity of the child and the school be revealed. The final report will be made available to all interested. The University of Limpopo psychologists will provide counselling should any of the parents require that.

Your assistance in advertising the study in the weekly school news letter is appreciated. We hope the study will contribute to the establishment of valuable information on ADHD and the prescribing of methylphenidate, Ritalin® in primary school children.

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**BC COETZEE**  
**B.Pharm**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anneke Meyer', with a horizontal line drawn below the name.

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**PROF ANNEKE MEYER**  
**CO-SUPERVISOR**