The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire hyperactivity-inattention subscale is more sensitive for the ADHD-combined subtype than other subtypes in 7–9-year-old school children

METHODS
Design: Cross-sectional study.

MAIN RESULTS
Using the SNAP-IV standard, 326 children met the criteria for the ADHD phenotype, resulting in an overall prevalence of 5.2% (5.3% ADHD-Co, 1.6% ADHD-I, 0.3% ADHD-H/I). The receiver operating characteristic curve for the teacher report SDQ hyperactivity-inattention subscale estimated the AUC for predicting the ADHD phenotype as 0.95 (95% CI 0.94 to 0.95), and the AUC for parent reports as 0.91 (95% CI 0.90 to 0.92). There were no significant gender differences for parent reports, however, teacher reports showed a significantly better AUC for girls (0.96, 95% CI 0.95 to 0.97) than boys (0.92, 95% CI 0.91 to 0.94). Using a cutoff score of 7 out of 10 on the teacher report SDQ hyperactivity-inattention identified 55% of the boys and 32% of the girls with the SNAP-IV ADHD phenotype. The parent reports using this same threshold identified 35% of boys and 34% of girls with the SNAP-IV ADHD phenotype. Using the predictive algorithm for predicting ‘probable’ cases had a sensitivity of 23% for the ADHD phenotype, a specificity of close to 100% and PPV of 0.93. Including participants identified by the algorithm as ‘possible’ cases increased the sensitivity to 52%, with a specificity of 98% and PPV of 0.58. By ADHD subtype, using the predictive algorithm to identify ‘possible’ or ‘probable’ cases identified 74% of children were with the ADHD-Co phenotype according to the SNAP-IV, 22% with ADHD-I and 14% with ADHD-H/I.

CONCLUSIONS
Obtaining good sensitivity for the ADHD phenotype with the 5-item SDQ hyperactivity-inattention subscale may require a lower cutoff than 7/10 in Norwegian school-aged children. It has better sensitivity for the ADHD – combined subtype than for the ADHD – inattentive or ADHD – hyperactive/impulsive subtypes.

ABSTRACTED FROM

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Sources of funding: Norwegian Research Council and the Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Unifob Health, Bergen.