

Dads and ADHD

Dr Alex Doig

Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

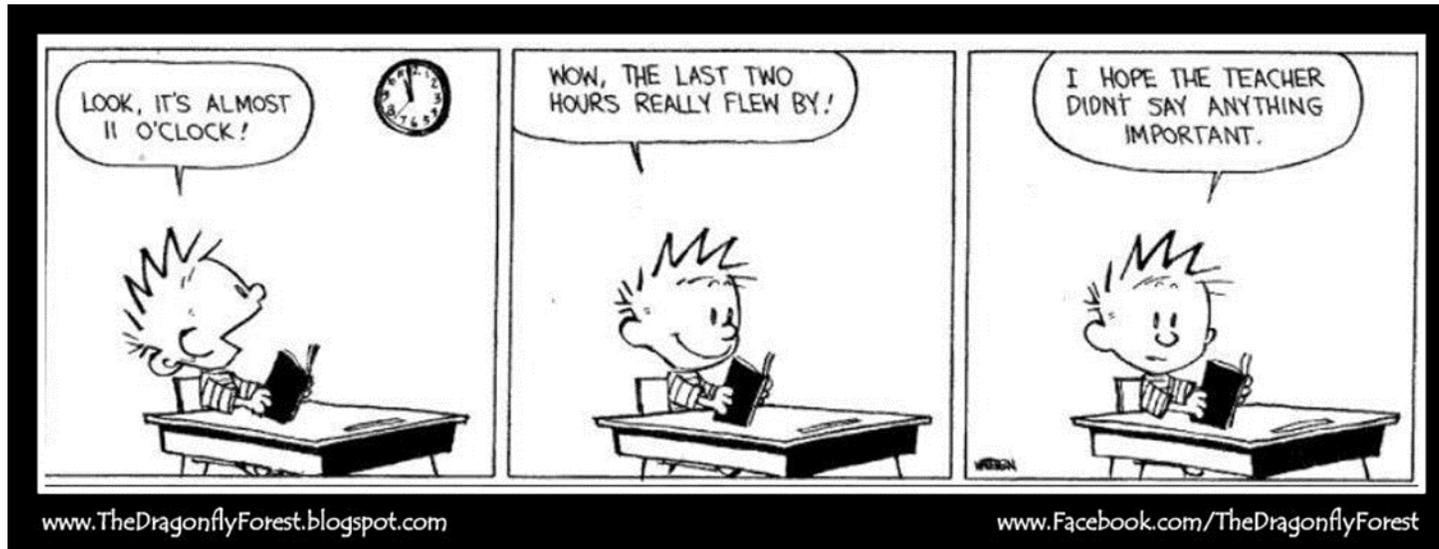
Richmond CAMHS

Plan

- ▶ Assumptions:
 - ▶ How many are ADHD believers?
 - ▶ How many are sceptical? Questioning?
 - ▶ How many are ADHD non-believers?
- ▶ What is ADHD?
- ▶ Boys vs Girls
- ▶ Why do some people have ADHD?
- ▶ Importance of Dads
- ▶ Where it can go pear shaped
- ▶ Dads at their best
- ▶ Questions / Feedback

What is ADHD?

- ▶ ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder
 - ▶ Pretty much born with it
- ▶ Brain is hardwired to act differently



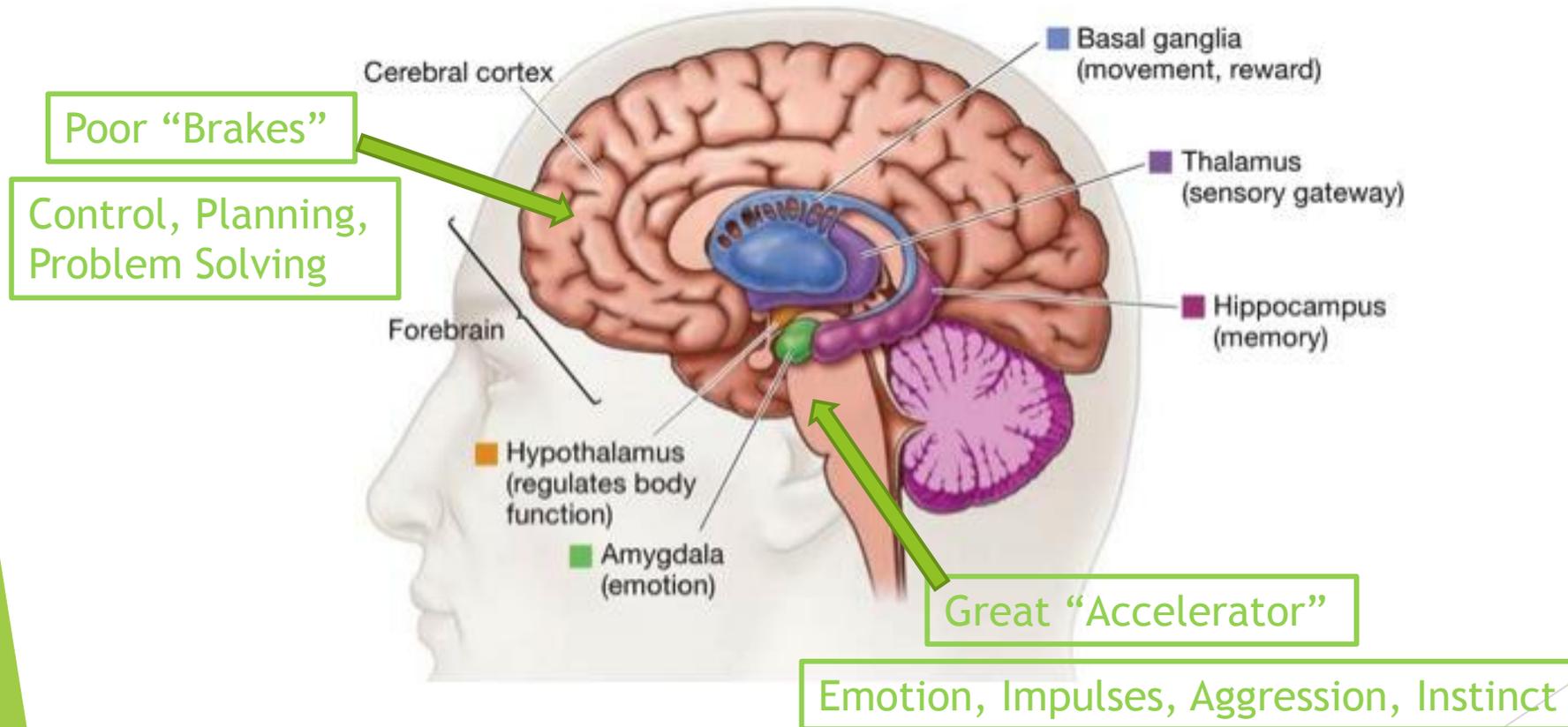
What is ADHD

- ▶ Better at quick reactions / creative & imaginative
- ▶ Problems with attention
 - ▶ It isn't that they can't concentrate, they can't regulate concentration
 - ▶ Easily distracted
 - ▶ Hyperfocused
- ▶ Hyperactivity
 - ▶ Fidget, restless, talkative
- ▶ Poor impulse control
- ▶ Labile emotions / poor emotional regulation

Boys vs Girls

- ▶ Boys with a diagnosis of ADHD outnumber girls 6:1 in the UK
 - ▶ Ranges from 3:1 (Norway) to 16:1 (Austria)
- ▶ In adulthood, ratio is much more equal
- ▶ Boys - identified earlier - more hyper, more impulsive, physical
- ▶ Girls - identified later - more inattentive, low self esteem, verbal

So why do some people have ADHD?



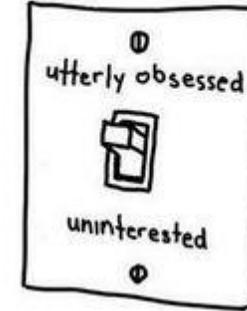
Why do some people have ADHD?

▶ Brain Structure

- ▶ ADHD brains about 3-4% smaller than peers without ADHD (no effect on IQ).
- ▶ Kids with severe ADHD had smaller frontal lobes, smaller caudate nucleus, smaller temporal lobes (all structures involved with concentration, impulse control, inhibition, and motor activity).
- ▶ Brain development across the years is the same with and without ADHD, so any changes are very early on.

Why do some people have ADHD?

how my brain works.



▶ Brain Chemistry

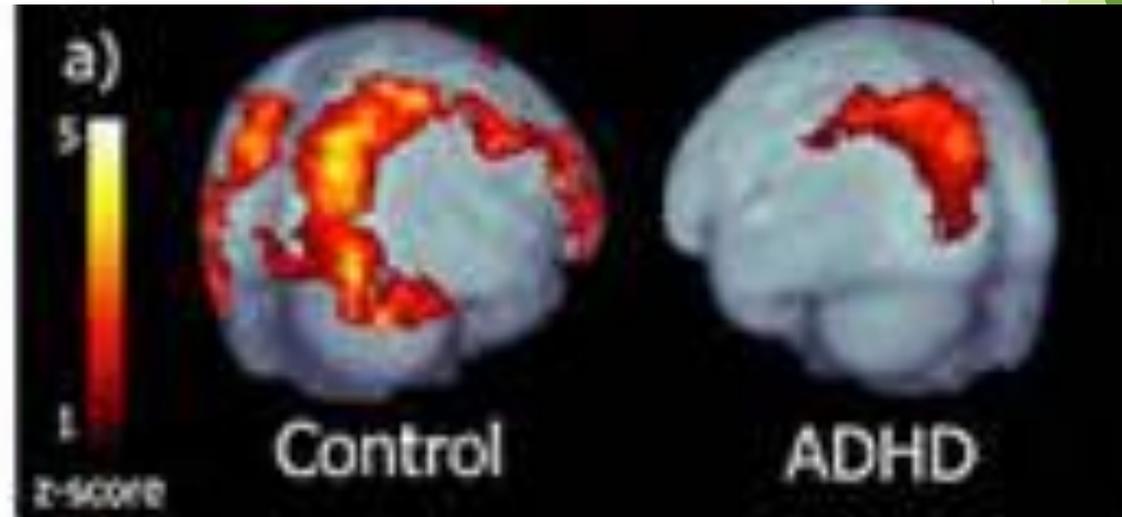
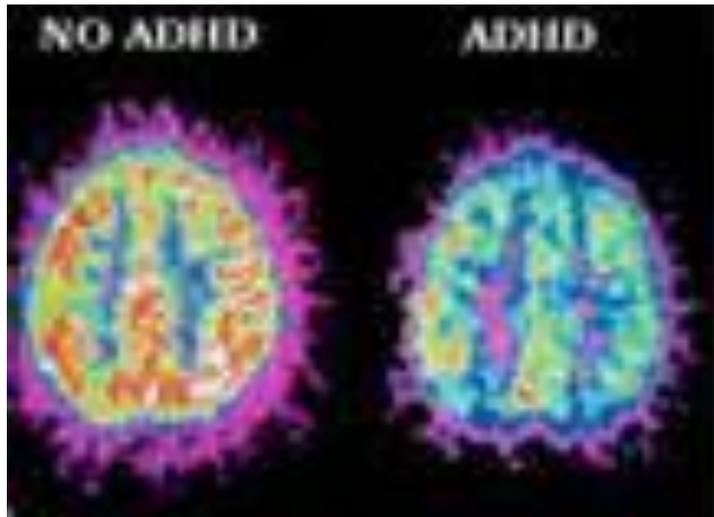
- ▶ Kids with ADHD have less active dopamine in their brains.
- ▶ More dopamine transporters, so dopamine removed too quickly.
- ▶ Dopamine is involved with attaching attention, gaining pleasure / reward for activities, inhibiting background noise, inhibiting inappropriate behaviours.

▶ Genetics

- ▶ a parent with ADHD 57% likely to have a child with ADHD (similar to height / eyes).
- ▶ Dopamine genes seem strongest candidates - dopamine receptor genes and dopamine transporter genes.
- ▶ Nomadic tribes in Kenya with ADHD genetic markers better fed.

Why do some people have ADHD?

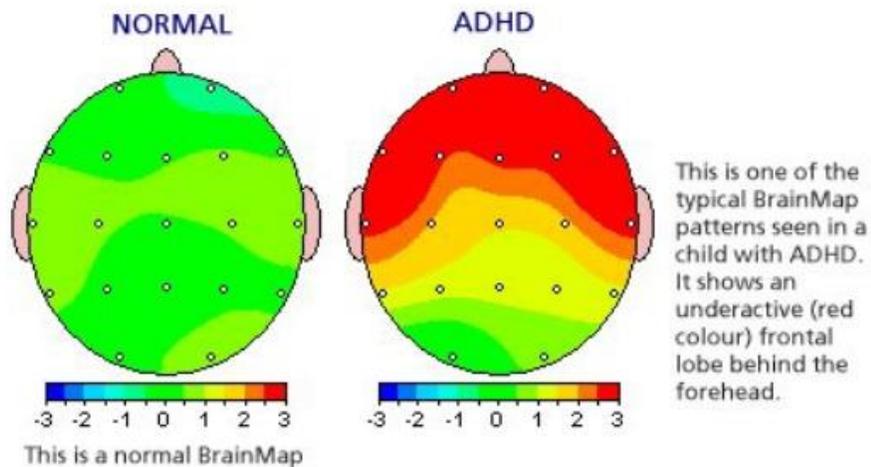
fMRI - highlights blood flow to the brain during activity
(functional magnetic resonance imaging)



PET scan shows take up of glucose at rest
(positron emission tomography)

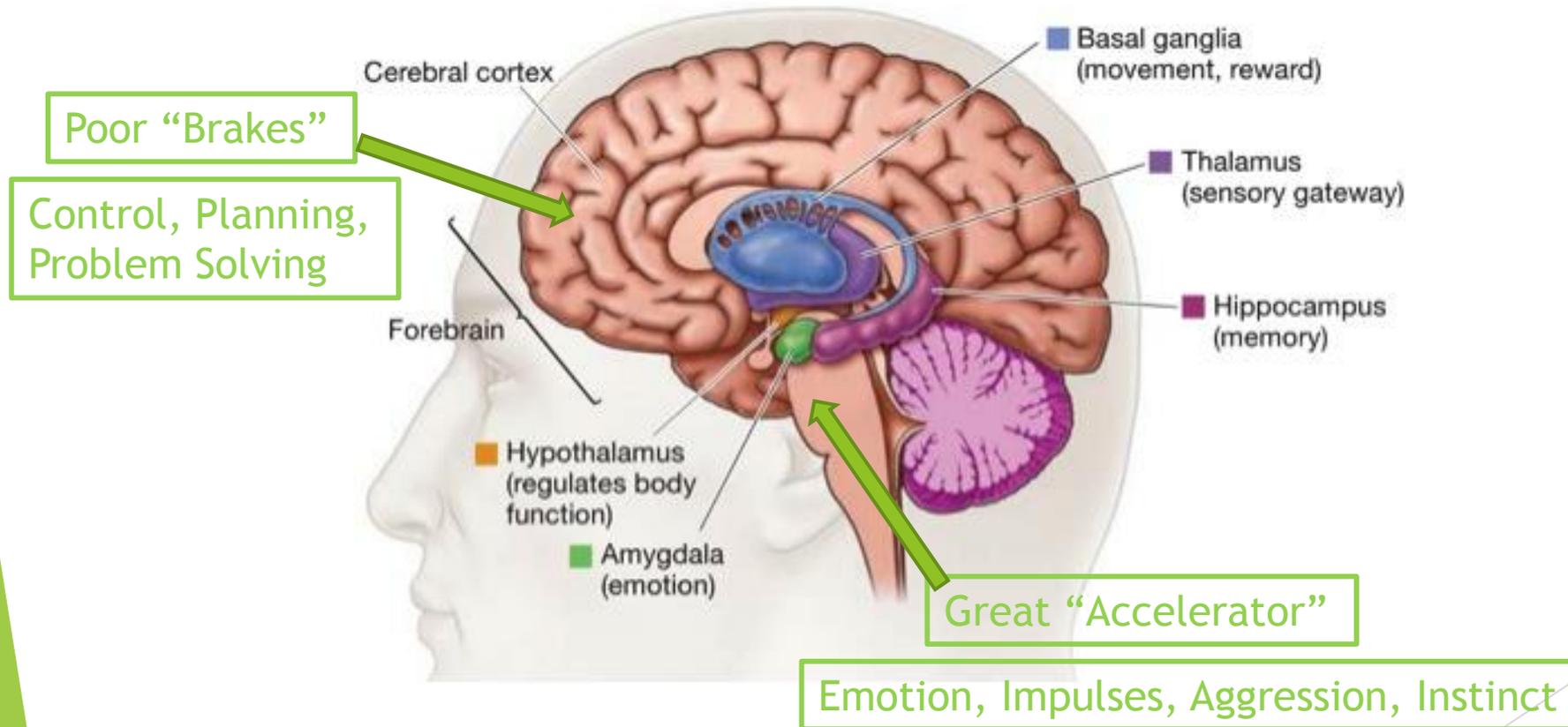
Why do some people have ADHD?

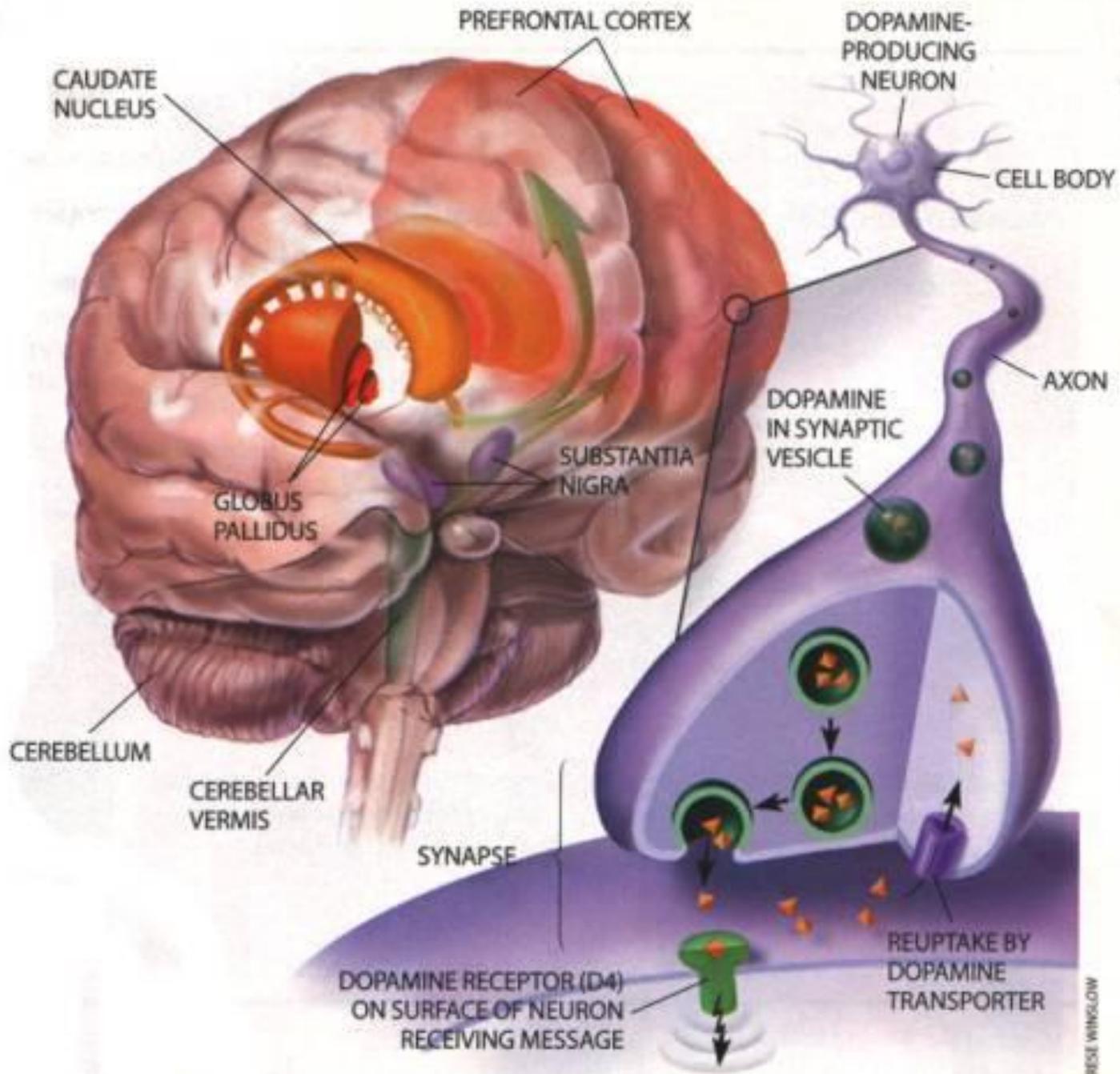
EEG Brain Research - ADHD



“In the child with ADHD, the frontal part of the brain shows excess immature activity in the form of slow (theta) wave activity.”
http://www.sydneydevelopmentalclinic.com.au/brain_scanning.htm

So why do some people have ADHD?





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Importance of Dads

- ▶ For all children
 - ▶ Having an involved Dad more likely to be emotionally secure and have better social connections
 - ▶ Active & nurturing father style leads to better verbal skills, better at school
 - ▶ Playful activities with Dad lead to better emotional regulation
 - ▶ For boys - involved Dads lead to positive gender role
 - ▶ For girls - involved Dads leads to positive view of men and better relationships with men

Importance of Dads (not really gender specific)

- ▶ Structure, predictability, routine
 - ▶ Dad's can really help with the routine
 - ▶ Planning transitions - home from work, weekends
- ▶ Problem solving
 - ▶ Playing games - think of three options, which is best option, put it down, is it still the best option? (allow take back until committed)
 - ▶ Made a mistake - what are the other two options you could have chosen, if you had done that what would be different?
- ▶ Physical activity
 - ▶ Sports, running, swimming
 - ▶ Green spaces better than concrete jungle

Where it can go pear shaped

- ▶ Not looking after yourself or your relationship
 - ▶ Keep healthy, exercise, discuss with other dad's, take a break
 - ▶ Talk, time, tenderness
- ▶ Angry reaction - Alpha male challenges
 - ▶ Challenge to authority - shouting, swearing, hitting - child is impulsive and will pick it up and use it
 - ▶ Calm authority, Clear and immediate consequences - if not within next 2 minutes, don't bother
 - ▶ (do the 123 Magic course!)

Dads at their best - feedback from young people

- ▶ Praise
 - ▶ ADHD kids get very little - catching the small things and reinforcing it
 - ▶ Nice when Dad sees you've done well, it's a big thing when you say you're proud
- ▶ Shared activities - Dad time - he sees me as important
- ▶ Going to important meetings - school / CAMHS - young people see you are involved and that you care. If you can't get to the meeting ask for feedback

