

# Who Needs Ritalin?

*Last year in Canada, more than two million prescriptions for Ritalin and other ADHD drugs were written specifically for children under 17 years of age. At least 75 per cent of these prescriptions were written for young males.*

*For school children across the country – most of them boys – taking a drug for attention deficit disorder each morning has become as commonplace as downing a vitamin. But the daily ritual has been quietly growing in Canada, year after year – a trend that's dwarfing rates in other countries and raising disturbing questions about the forces driving it.*

Source: Global and Mail. Failing Boys: Part 3 of 6. Are we medicating a disorder or treating boyhood as a disease?

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/failing-boys/part-3-are-we-medicating-a-disorder-or-treating-boyhood-as-a-disease/article1762859/>

## What are these drugs?

Cerebral stimulants such as Ritalin act on the central nervous system and provide a temporary sense of alertness and well-being as well as relief from fatigue.

For example, Ritalin (methylphenidate) and Adderall (amphetamines), used for treating attention deficit (AD) disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are central nervous system stimulants that help the brain be more selective in the way it filters and responds to various stimuli.

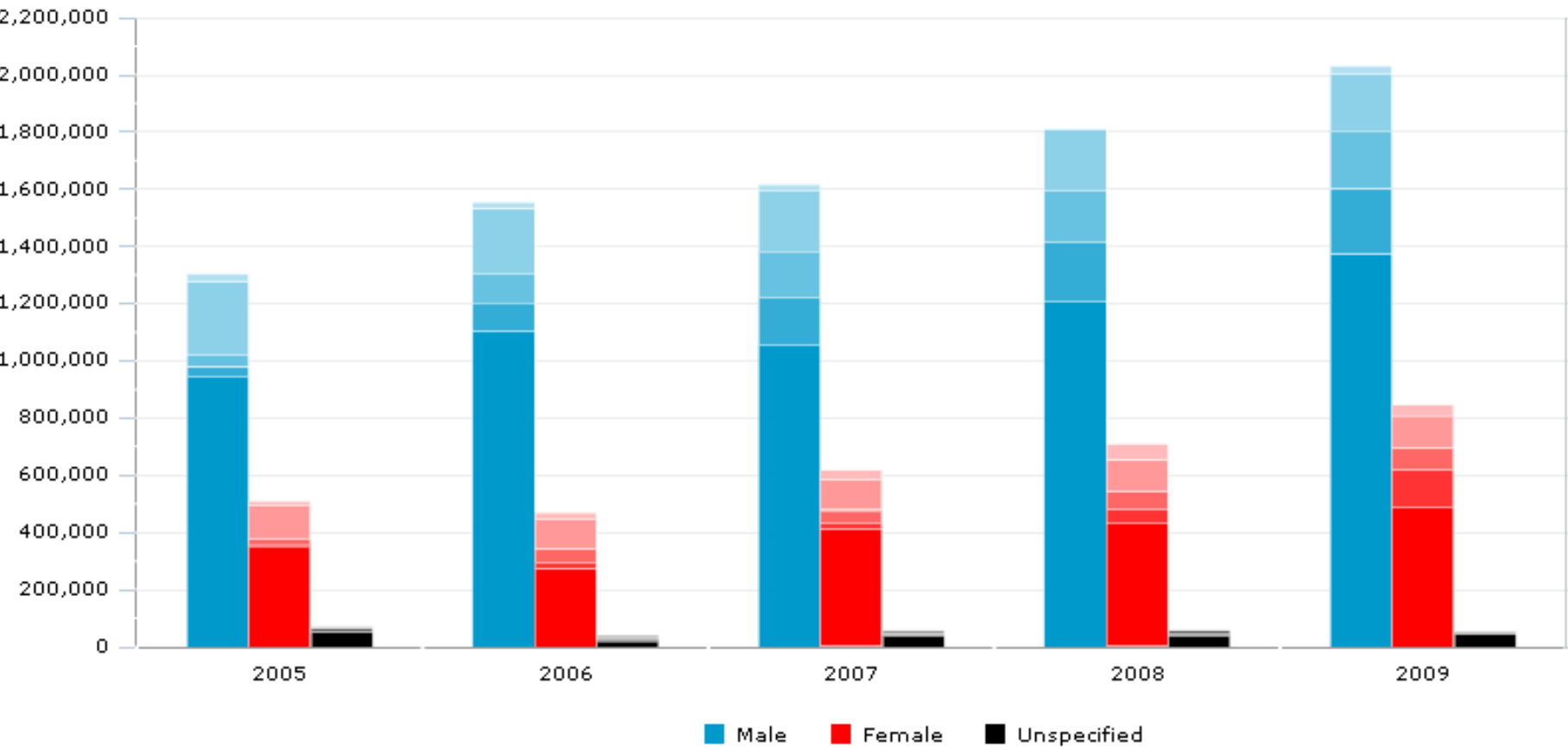
Source: Healthy Pathways Forwards: BC PHO Report on the Health and Wellbeing of Aboriginal Peoples in BC. 2007.

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/abohlth11-var7.pdf>

# Canadian Sales of Cerebral Stimulants by Gender:2005 - 2009

Figures compiled by IMS Health, an independent firm that tracks pharmaceutical sales, show prescriptions for Ritalin and other amphetamine-like drugs for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) shot up to **\$2.9 million in 2009**, a jump of more than 55 per cent in four years.

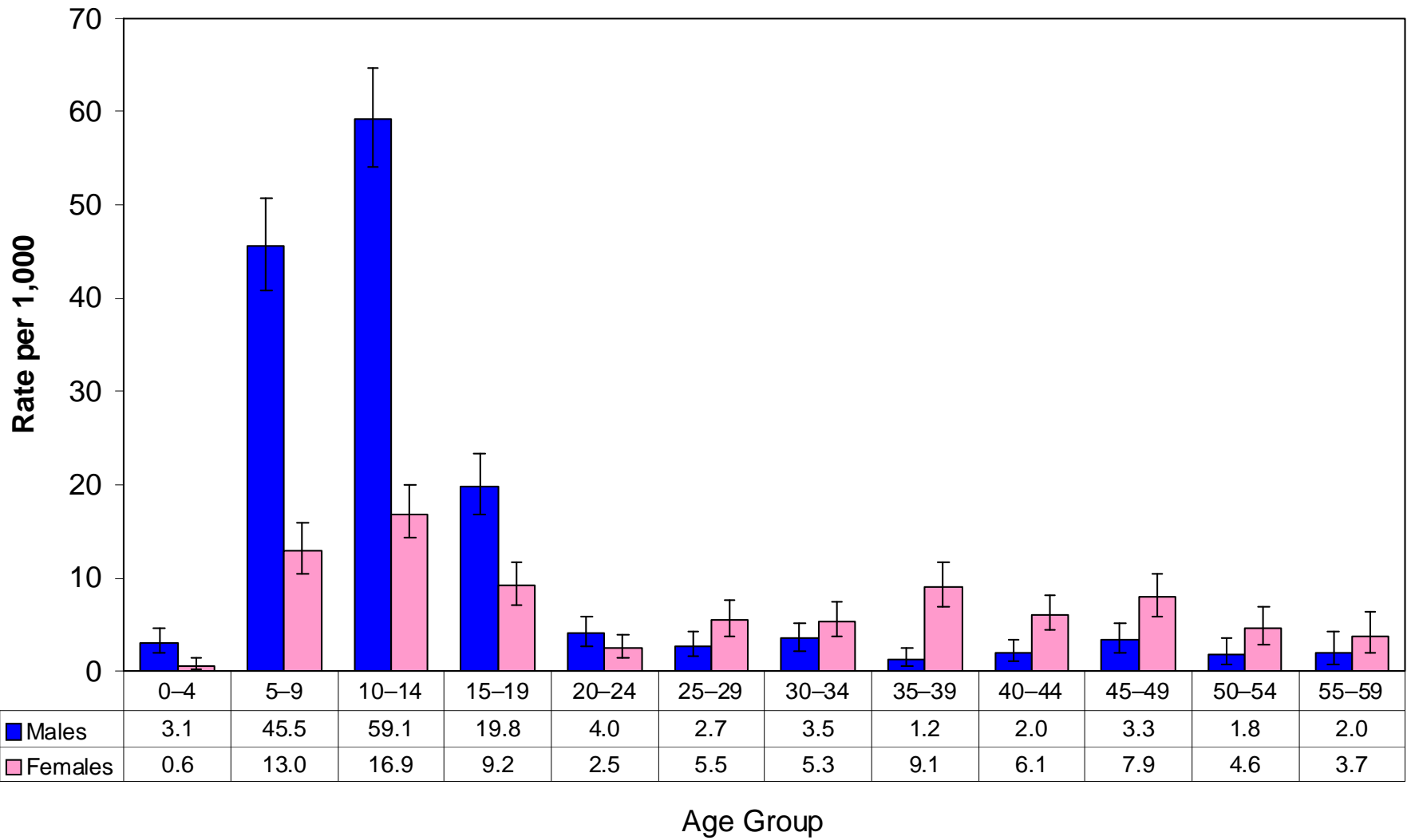
**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED FROM CANADIAN RETAIL PHARMACIES BY GENDER**



Source: Prescriptions for ADHD Drugs in Canada by Gender, published by The Globe & Mail, October 2010.  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/failing-boys/prescriptions-for-adhd-drugs-by-gender/article1761612/>

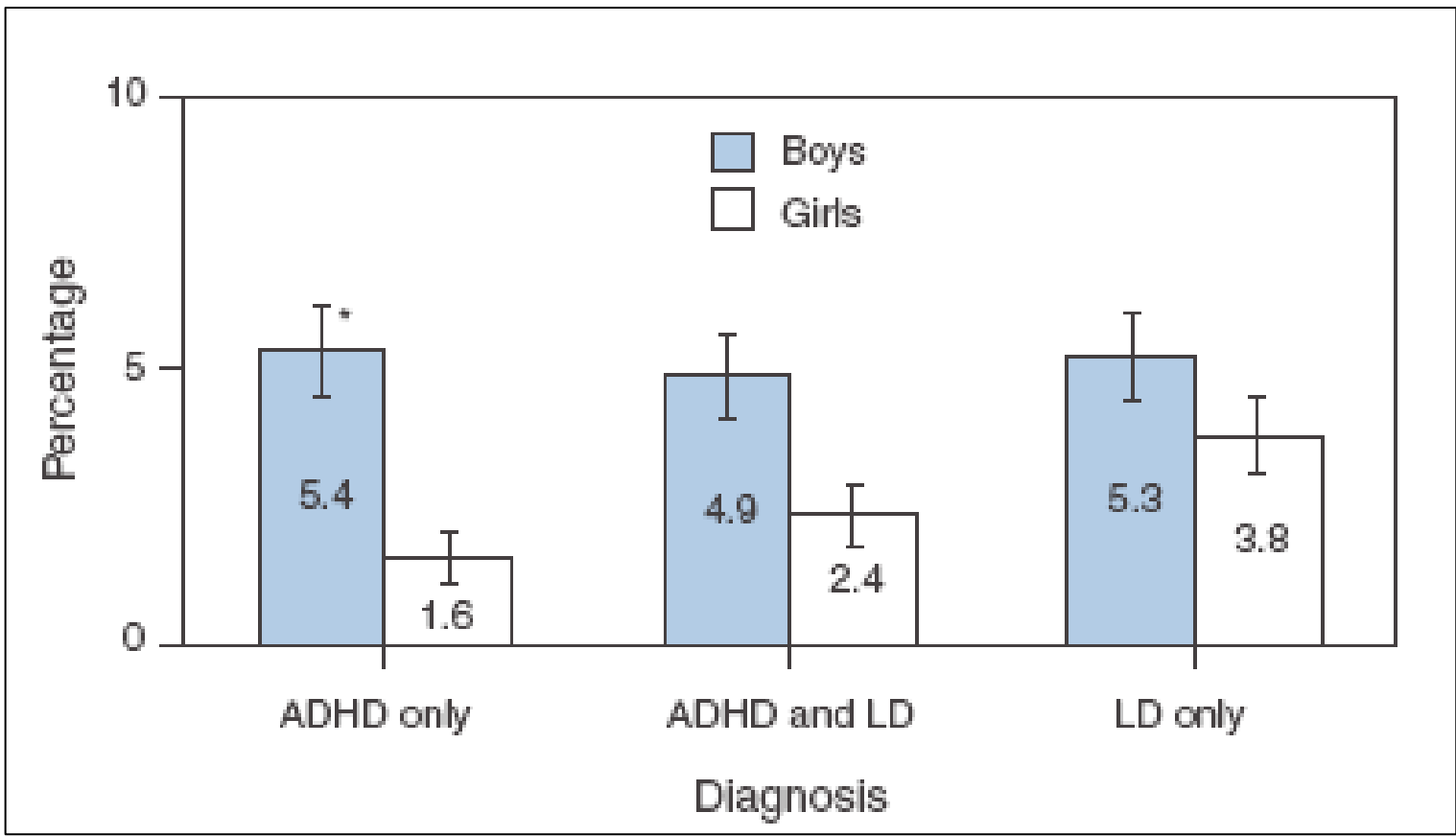
# Persons receiving prescriptions for cerebral stimulants in BC

Status Indian persons: 2006



Source: BC Pharma-Net data, provided by the BC College of Pharmacists; prepared by Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008. Published in Healthy Pathways Forwards: BC PHO Report on the Health and Wellbeing of Aboriginal Peoples in BC. 2007. <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/abohlth11-var7.pdf>

# Percentage of Children Aged 5-17 Years Ever Having Diagnoses of (ADHD) or Learning Disability (LD): United States, 2003.



In 2003, approximately 16% of boys and 8% of girls aged 5-17 years had ever had diagnoses of ADHD or LD. Boys were three times more likely than girls to have diagnoses of ADHD without LD. Boys were also more likely than girls to have LD diagnosed, either with or without ADHD.

Source: US Centre for Disease Control Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) November 4, 2005 / 54(43);1107  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5443a8.htm>