

SCIENCE - JANUARY 19, 2016

'Less Ritalin in green neighbourhood'

Text: **Roelof Kleis**

Mini-interview

Who? Sjerp de Vries, environmental psychologist at Alterra

Why? Studied the link between ADHD and the amount of vegetation in the neighbourhood

What? The greener the neighbourhood, the less ADHD



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And, been inundated with calls from journalists?

'No, it's been disappointing. Only one journalist has called. I had higher expectations. The combination of children, ADHD, green space and the strength of the correlation struck me as newsworthy. In poor neighbourhoods more green space is linked to 10 percent less use of drugs like Ritalin.'

The effect is only large in poor neighbourhoods. Are more educated parents less quick to resort to Ritalin?

‘That’s possible. But that doesn’t explain the pattern we found that within the category of poorer neighbourhoods more green space goes with less use of Ritalin.’

So ADHD children would be better off moving to a greener neighbourhood?

‘You could first try letting the child play out in a green environment a bit more often. Anyone can carry out that test. Go out into nature more often.’

Will this be followed up?

‘Yes. We shall look at the relation between the greenness of the surroundings and the diagnosis of the GP. That will give a better idea. Only 40 percent of the children diagnosed with ADHD are put on a Ritalin-type drug.’



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Reaction



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