

ADHD drug is 'stunting growth'

EXCLUSIVEBy **Lucy Johnston**

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A DRUG taken by thousands of children for "attention deficit disorder" stunts growth, research has claimed.

Those who took Ritalin or similar chemicals for behavioural problems were an inch and a half shorter than children on "non-drug" therapies.

The study said there was also no evidence the drug helped after more than ~~three years of use~~.

The study assessed 580 seven to 10 year olds and followed them up to the age of 16 and then again aged 25.

Participants were given the drug across seven medical sites in America and Canada.

Researchers believe the chemicals in Ritalin may affect hormones linked to bone growth.

Ohio State University psychiatry Professor Eugene Arnold said: "We need to be cautious using this drug because of possible unwanted effects. We need to use it only in those with serious symptoms that are impairing their life."

The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry published the study.

One in 20 UK children – about 400,000 – is affected by attention deficit disorder. Drugs to treat ADHD have been linked to weight gain, suicidal thoughts and irregular heartbeats.