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## ADHD prescriptions may face govt inquiry

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The federal government wants an investigation into whether doctors are prescribing Ritalin to pre-schoolers against the advice of drug makers.

Parliamentary secretary for health Christopher Pyne said he was "very concerned" by revelations that some doctors were prescribing the medication to children under six to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and would ask the Therapeutic Goods Administration on Monday to investigate the use of the drugs, The Weekend Australian newspaper reported.

Pharmaceutical maker Novartis told the newspaper doctors should not be prescribing Ritalin to children under six as the "safety and efficacy in this age group have not been established", but a Sydney pediatrician and ADHD specialist said it is common for young children with serious ADHD to be put on the stimulant drug.

Novartis also warned against the long-term use of methylphenidate - which covers drugs branded Ritalin, Attenta and Concerta - because of incomplete safety data.

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