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Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (ADDM) Tracking Autism in Wisconsin: What You Need to Know

Wisconsin is 1 of 12 states participating in a program to monitor the number of children with autism, cerebral palsy, and other developmental disabilities.

The program is called Wisconsin Surveillance of Autism and other Developmental Disabilities System (WISADDS). In addition to measuring prevalence, WISADDS collects information on characteristics and risk factors for autism spectrum disorders (ASD), including:

- Age of identification of ASD
- Relationship between parental age and ASD risk
- Socioeconomic disparities in the prevalence of ASD

WISADDS is a valuable resource for clinicians. Along with tracking autism and developmental disabilities, WISADDS also sponsors education and training to help providers recognize and diagnose early signs of ASD and cerebral palsy.

Autism Spectrum Disorders: How prevalent are they in Wisconsin?

The latest survey of ASD in Wisconsin was completed by WISADDS in 2008. Here's what the survey found.

Prevalence

Out of all the 8-year-old children in the study area (a total of 34,451 children):

- 267 children were identified with ASD.
- The total prevalence was 7.8 per 1,000.

This means that 1 in 129 of the children surveyed has ASD.

Sex

ASD was found to be more prevalent in boys than girls.

- For boys, the prevalence was 11.7 per 1,000.
- For girls, the prevalence was 3.7 per 1,000.

This means that 1 in every 85 boys surveyed has ASD, and 1 in every 270 girls.

Race/ Ethnicity

ASD was found to be most common among white children, as compared to black and Hispanic children.

- For white children, the prevalence was 8.6 per 1,000.
- For black children, the prevalence was 5.0 per 1,000.
- For Hispanic children, the prevalence was 3.8 per 1,000.

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This means that 1 in every 116 white children have ASD, compared to 1 in every 200 black children and 1 in every 263 Hispanic children.

Diagnosis

Of the 267 children identified with ASD, 83% had a diagnosis in their records. The median earliest age of diagnosis was 4 years, 5 months.

The median earliest age of diagnosis for specific disorders was:

- Autistic disorder: 3 years, 10 months
- ASD/pervasive development disorder (PDD): 4 years, 4 months
- Asperger disorder: 6 years, 2 months

[Graph image]

Overall ASD Prevalence in Children [title]

Prevalence per 1,000 [y axis]

Survey year [x axis]

National (all ADDM sites) [line on graph]

Wisconsin (WISADDS survey) [line on graph]

Site Information

These 10 Wisconsin counties were included in the 2008 survey: Dane, Green, Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Rock, Walworth, and Waukesha.

[Map]

Yellow: Counties included in the 2008 survey.

The racial or ethnic identification of the 8-year-old children in the study area (a total of 34,451 children) was:

- White: 65.2%
- Black: 16.9%
- Hispanic: 13.7%
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 3.7%

[Pie chart?]

Representing racial make-up of children in study.

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Where Can I Get Training and Education on ASD?

WISADDS sponsors workshops and trainings in southeastern Wisconsin to help health care providers identify developmental disabilities early on.

We also want to spread the word about standardized diagnostic practices related to ASDs. These include:

- Childhood autism
- Asperger syndrome
- Atypical autism
- PDD not otherwise specified

Find a listing of trainings on our website at <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/wisadds/>

Find Resources in Wisconsin:

- **Learn the Signs. Act Early.** is a CDC campaign to raise awareness about developmental milestones and the importance of screening and early intervention. Visit www.ActEarly.wisc.edu for more information.
- **Wisconsin Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)** provides training related to early identification, autism, developmental screening, and community-based resources. To find out what's available in your area, visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/children/overview/index.htm.
- **Finding Your Way: A Navigation Guide for Wisconsin Families Who Have Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities** has brief descriptions of programs, services, and systems of support available in to families Wisconsin. You can download the booklet at http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cedd/pdfs/products/community/FYW_e.pdf.
- **Wisconsin First Step** is a 24-hour hotline and searchable online database for families and health care providers who support children and youth with special needs. Call 1-800-642-7837 or visit www.mch-hotlines.org.
- **The Autism Society of Wisconsin** has many resources for individuals, families, and professionals affected by autism. To find out more or locate your local chapter, visit www.asw4autism.org or call 1-888-4-AUTISM.

Learn More About WISADDS:

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WISADDS is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and researchers from the Waisman Center and Department of Population Health Sciences at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Find articles we've authored at
<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/wisadds/publications.php>

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