



Pennsylvania Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Project

The Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now funding researchers in many states, including Pennsylvania, to enhance public health programs to monitor the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders. The goal of the ADDM Network is to provide comparable, population-based estimates of the prevalence rates of autism and related disorders in different sites over time. For more information please see: <http://www.cdc.gov/autism>

What is the Pennsylvania Autism and Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (PADDSP)?

PADDSP is part of the ADDM Network. It is a multiple-source, multi-year project to determine and monitor the number of children in Philadelphia with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This public health program will help establish an accurate count of the number of Philadelphia children with autism in selected years. This project was recently completed for 2002 and is ongoing for children in 2006. Prevalence among children in 2008 will begin upon completion of the previous year. The investigators are members of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

What part of Pennsylvania is included in PADDSP Autism Program?

The program will include the entire county of Philadelphia.

How many people in Pennsylvania are receiving services for autism by the Pennsylvania Department of Education?

The most recent school year reported from the department is 2004-2005. During this year in Pennsylvania there were 708 8 year olds enrolled in special education receiving autism services and 7042 children aged 6-21. Specific to Philadelphia County, 66 children aged 8 were receiving services for autism and 755 aged 6-21.

How common are autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) among children who live in Philadelphia?

Data available from PADDSP from the 2002 study year found that 5.3 per 1,000 children had an ASD. This resulted in 111 eight year old children being identified with an ASD within the Pennsylvania study area.

What kinds of education and training programs will the project offer to people who work with children who have ASDs?

The Pennsylvania center plans a program of education and outreach to inform health care providers, educators, and the community about the need to monitor the prevalence of ASD and the educational and health care needs of children with ASD and their families.

Are PADDSP personnel involved in any other autism projects?

The Pennsylvania center is interested in studying genetic and environmental factors and their roles in causing ASDs. The Pennsylvania Center is also interested in how children are screened at an early age for signs of an ASD, and how they are referred for diagnosis and treatment. Screening children may begin as early as 18 to 24 months of age for signs of developmental delay, including ASD. After a child is diagnosed as having an ASD, the Pennsylvania center will study ways to help parents deal with the issues that arise as they seek medical and other treatments as well as educational and other services for their child.

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