

Wisconsin Surveillance of Autism & Other Developmental Disabilities



The Autism and Developmental Disorders Monitoring Network (ADDM Network). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now funding researchers in many states, including Wisconsin, to develop programs to monitor the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders and mental retardation. The goal of the ADDM Network is to provide comparable, population-based estimates of the prevalence of autism, mental retardation and related disorders in different sites over time. For more information please see:
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddautism.htm.

The Wisconsin Surveillance of Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities System (WISADDS) is a multiple-source investigation to determine and monitor the number of eight year-old children in the population with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or mental retardation. This 2-year epidemiologic study will help establish, for the first time, an accurate count of the number of Wisconsin children and families affected by these disorders. This project is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and investigators from the Waisman Center and Department of Population Health Sciences of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The WISADDS is a joint undertaking with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, and many other agencies and organizations that serve children with developmental disabilities and their families.

What part of Wisconsin is included in the WISADDS? The study will initially include 10 counties of southeastern Wisconsin, including the counties of Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Waukesha, Jefferson, Rock, Dane, Green and Walworth, and may expand to include the entire State in the future. About 33,000 babies are born in these counties each year and about half of the State's population reside in these counties.

How many people 3-21 years of age are classified as having autism by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction? In the 2002-03 school year, 3,083 or 0.35% of Wisconsin's 881,231 public school students were classified as having autism and received special education services, while 12,750 (1.45%) were classified as having cognitive disability. The number of Wisconsin children receiving special educational services for autism tripled between 1997 and 2002.

How common are autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and mental retardation among children who live in Wisconsin and are ASDs becoming more prevalent? Public health professionals do not know how common these disorders are or whether the apparent increase in the number of children identified with ASDs is due to improved recognition or increasing prevalence in the population. The WISADDS will help us learn how many children in Wisconsin have these disorders and will provide a baseline for monitoring trends.

What kinds of education and training programs will the project offer to people who work with children who have ASDs and other developmental disabilities? The project will sponsor a workshop in early identification of developmental disorders for pediatricians and other health care providers serving southeastern Wisconsin. The goal is to improve capacity for recognizing early signs of ASDs and for standard diagnostic practices related to ASDs, including childhood autism, Asperger's syndrome, atypical autism and pervasive developmental disorder, and to other developmental disabilities.

What are some of the resources available in Wisconsin for children with developmental disabilities and their families? The Waisman Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the Medical College of Wisconsin offer programs dedicated to developmental disabilities research, diagnosis and treatment (<http://www.waisman.edu> or <http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/index.htmlx>).



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www.cdc.gov/ncbddd

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