



What is the key take-away message?

There continue to be many children living with ASD who need services and support, both now and as they grow into adolescence and adulthood. More needs to be done to ensure that all children with ASD are evaluated and diagnosed as early as possible so that they can be connected to the services they need.

Why was the percentage of children identified with ASD higher in some areas but not in others?

The percentage of children identified with ASD was significantly higher in areas of New Jersey and Wisconsin in 2014 compared with 2012, while the percentage stayed the same in other areas. Currently, research does not show that living in certain communities puts children at greater risk for developing ASD. These geographic differences could be related to how the ADDM Network identifies children—for example, access to health versus both health and special education records. It could also be due to changes in how children are identified and served in their local communities—for example, variations across communities in insurance coverage for ASD services. Continuing to track ASD over time will help us monitor future changes.

How many children in the United States have ASD?

Currently, there is not a full count of all individuals with ASD living in the United States. However, some researchers outside the ADDM Network estimate that there are currently between 500,000 and 1 million children aged 6-17 years living with ASD in the United States.

How does the ADDM Network estimate compare to other estimates that report as many as 1 in 50 or 1 in 36 children have ASD?

Estimates from the ADDM Network, the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) cannot be directly compared because they use different methods to collect their information and look at different age groups. NSCH and NHIS, based on national surveys of parent experiences, can provide insight into how many children have been diagnosed with ASD and other developmental disabilities. The ADDM Network findings further enrich our understanding of ASD by working with communities across the United States to collect information on specific characteristics of children with ASD, and tracking changes in those communities and within different subgroups over time.