Prevalence and Characteristics of Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Area

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Bottom Line up Front:

One-in-56 adolescents in the NJ-NY region were identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

One-in-four adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) were NOT diagnosed through 16 years.

59% of adolescents with ASD had one or more co-occurring neuropsychiatric disorders.

ASD prevalence was greater in High SES communities, compared to Low SES communities.

Key Findings:

- Approximately 2% (1 in 56; 17.7 per 1,000) of adolescents across NJ communities had ASD
- 60% had moderate or severe impairment due to ASD
- 3 in 5 ASD adolescents had co-occurring conditions, including: ADHD, Mood & Anxiety Disorders
- 4:1 male: female ASD prevalence rate
- Greater ASD prevalence in High SES communities
    - High SES adolescent ASD prevalence = 25.4 per 1,000
    - Low SES adolescent ASD prevalence = 12.6 per 1,000
- Race-based differences in ASD prevalence
    - White = 22.2 per 1,000
    - Hispanic = 13.1 per 1,000
    - Black = 16.9 per 1,000
- Individuals identified with ASD after 8 years were more likely to have
    - mild or moderate impairment
    - IQ > 70
    - co-occurring conditions
- Black and Hispanic adolescents with ASD were more likely to have IQ < 70 than White peers

Key Messages:

Three of five adolescents with ASD (59%) have one or more additional neuropsychiatric disorders.

One-in-four adolescents with ASD was undiagnosed through age 16 years.

There are wealth-based and race-based disparities in adolescents with identified ASD.

There are wealth and race-based differences in co-occurring intellectual disability and neuro-psychiatric disorders among adolescents with ASD.

The ASD prevalence rates determined in New Jersey by the active surveillance method were equivalent at 8 and 16 years, indicating limited increase in ASD diagnosis with increasing age, in this cohort.

The slight increase in identification of ASD cases after age 8, reflected individuals with mild impairment, co-occurring disorders and IQ>70.