

## Autism Fact Sheet

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) is a general terms to describe developmental disorders that appear in the first 3 years of life, impacting social and communication skills.<sup>1</sup> The condition is thought to have multiple risk factors including genetic, environmental and immunological components. Today, many more children are being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders than ever before. To date there is no cure for the disorder, only therapies and medicine to help treat the symptoms or behaviors associated with ASDs, making it an active area of research. Scientists and clinicians are working to identify risk factors and investigate new therapies to help treat the underlying neurological connectivity damage that may play a role in autism.

### **By the Numbers:**

- Approximately one in 88 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), up from one in 110 in 2006.<sup>2</sup>
- ASDs affect boys four to five times more often than girls, an estimated one in 54 boys in the U.S. Approximately one in 252 girls in the U.S. is diagnosed with an ASD.<sup>2</sup>
- More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes & cancer combined.<sup>3</sup>
- Autism will cost the nation \$126 billion per year.<sup>3</sup>
- Average medical expenditures for a child diagnosed with an ASD exceeded those without an ASD by \$4,110–\$6,200 per year. On average, medical expenditures for individuals with an ASD were 4.1–6.2 times greater than for those without an ASD.<sup>4</sup>
- Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases.<sup>3</sup>

### **Prevalence vs. Private Funding<sup>3</sup> for Research**

- Leukemia: Affects 1 in 1,200 / Funding: \$277 million
- Muscular Dystrophy: Affects 1 in 100,000 / Funding: \$162 million
- Pediatric AIDS: Affects 1 in 300 / Funding: \$394 million
- Juvenile Diabetes: Affects 1 in 500 / Funding: \$156 million
- Autism: Affects 1 in 88 / Funding: \$79 million

### **National Institutes of Health Funds Allocation<sup>3</sup>**

- Total 2011 NIH budget: \$30.5 billion
- Of this, only \$169 million goes directly to autism research. This represents 0.6% of total NIH funding.

1. PubMedHealth, U.S. National Library of Medicine, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002494/>, accessed May 2012

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Data and Statistics, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>, accessed May 2012

3. Autism Speaks, Facts about Autism <http://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/facts-about-autism>, accessed May 2012

4. Shimabukuro TT, Grosse SD, Rice C., Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, "Medical expenditures for children with an autism spectrum disorder in a privately insured population", 2008 Mar;38(3):546-52. Epub 2007 Aug 10.