

# *The Carter–Jenkins Center presents*



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# **AUTISM & AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

## **RECENT RESEARCH INFORMATION**

**by**

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# AUTISM & AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

## EPIDEMIOLOGY

- 1) Prevalence of 6/1000 for Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 2) Autism prevalence is 1-2/1000
- 3) Asperger syndrome is 0.6/1000
- 4) Childhood Disintegrative Disorder is 0.02/1000
- 5) More frequent in boys than in girls 4.2:1
- 6) Affects 1 in 70 males and only 1 in 315 females
- 7) In those with ASD and mental retardation ratio is 2:1
- 8) Females show less atypical behaviors, hence they are less likely to receive an ASD diagnosis
- 9) Rett disorder, mostly in girls. Devastating problem

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- The Asperger disorder, is being dropped out of DSM V but full details of that and other changes, will not appear until may 2013, when the new manual will be published.
- The DSM V, adds the term “autism spectrum disorders”, where Aspergers will now be included
- Some Asperger families fear, that because of that their children, may lose their educational services and benefits, but experts believe that will not be the case but just the contrary

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- Study of Twins Suggests Genetic Component of Autism Spectrum Disorders May Be Moderate, Environmental Component May Be Substantial (Health Orbit Summary).
- Published in: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/>

# AUTISM & AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

- Non-Genetic Factors Play a Large Role In Determining Autism According To Stanford University Study Group | Paper Published in the Archives of General Psychiatry in July 4th, 2011 (Summary by Health Orbit)

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- Same Study At Stanford University Suggested That One Of Many Possible Environmental Factors Causing Autism Might be Linked To Antidepressants Use
- Other possible risks factors are maternal gestational diabetes, maternal and paternal age over 30, bleeding after 1<sup>st</sup> trimester, use of meds during pregnancy, and meconium in the amniotic fluid.
- Babies, exposed to much traffic air pollution, in the womb or during the first year of life, are at higher risk to develop autism.



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- The researches do not say that pollution causes autism but that it is a possible risk for it \*
- Volk and colleagues, using how close a child lived to a freeway, instead of air pollution, compared 245 California kids without autism with 279 autistic children.
- They found, that the autistic were as close as twice as likely, to have been exposed to high levels of pollution while in the womb, and about three times as likely, to exposure to high pollution, during their first year of life

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- But the researches concluded that though pollutants can play a role in brain development it does not prove that air pollution makes children autistic given that there are so many other variables involved i.e., indoor pollution and second hand smoke
- Flu in pregnant women were twice as likely to have an autistic child. Those who had a fever for a week or more were three times as likely to have an autistic child which leads to a strong recommendation for all women to receive the flu vaccine. Nevertheless here too, there may be other factors involved and not the flu

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- Nevertheless, it should be understood that around 99% of women, who had flu during their pregnancy, do not have an autistic child. No cause for excessive alarm then
- Autism risk increases 70%, when women are obese during their pregnancies, but this does not mean that every obese pregnant woman, will have an autistic child
- Families with autistic children, need to be aware that they tend to run away frequently, a fact that creates the danger, of being hit by a car or even drowning.

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- Research is mostly not conclusive about much of the above factors, but has identified them more frequently in autistic children

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