

The Changing Prevalence of Autistic Disorder in a Welsh Health District (Abstract)

Webb, E.V.J., Lobo, S., Herras, A., Scourfield, J., & Fraser, W.I. (1997). The changing prevalence of autistic disorder in a Welsh health district. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 39, 150-152.

This research was completed as part of a needs assessment procedure. The authors examined prevalence rates for autistic disorder for children born during the period of 1977 to 1988 in the Welsh health district. Children were initially identified via screening by a variety of health care professionals, but further diagnosis was completed by appropriate medical personnel. The Autism Behavior Checklist was used in part of the screening process prior to full diagnostic assessments. The authors found an overall prevalence of 7.2 cases per 10,000. However, when the years 1977-79 were compared with the years 1987-89, the rates were 3.3 per 10,000 and 9.2 per 10,000. They also found a high male-to-female ratio. The authors state they are unsure if the increased prevalence is real or a byproduct of better diagnosis and screening in the latter years. Either way, they suggest that the increase has implications for service providers as these children require very specific interventions and supports.