When 1 in 150 is really 1 in 67

By

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On February 8, 2007 the CDC released **"**New Data on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) from Multiple Communities in the United States." (1)

Since then, most people and the press have been under the impression that in the United States, the "new" CDC- reported ASD prevalence rate of 1 in 150 was a recent discovery that was current for 2007 when indeed it was not at all. The study did not document a prevalence of 1 in 150 among children born now or five years ago. The study revealed that among U.S. children born in 1994, **thirteen years ago**, 1 in 150 on average had a spectral disorder.

According to the official press release:

> "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported findings today from the first and largest summary of prevalence data from multiple U.S. communities participating in an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) surveillance project. The results showed an average of 6.7 children out of 1,000 had an ASD in the six communities assessed in 2000, and an average of 6.6 children out of 1,000 having an ASD in the 14 communities included in the 2002 study. All children in the studies were eight years old because previous research has shown that most children with an ASD have been identified by this age for services."

The U.S.Department of Education has recently released the official figures for autism/ASD by age and state for school year 2006-2007, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's requirement that comprehensive annual reports be published and presented to the Umited States Congress.

Children born in 1994 and who according to the 2002 CDC study had an ASD prevalence of around 1 in 150, probably started first grade in the fall of 2000.

In table I, we compared by state, the number of 6 year-old children with Autism/ASD in U.S. schools in 2000-2001 with those similarly diagnosed children of the same age who attended school in 2006-2007. The percent increase in that particular group since the CDC's acclaimed 1 in 150 prevalence figures is listed by state in the right column.

All states, except Alaska and Oklahoma had increased first grade enrollment of children with spectral disorders. Thirty five (35) states more than doubled their load and consequently their financial needs and in New Mexico, the number of ASD students quadrupled between 2000 and 2006. The District of Columbia did not report.

STATE	2000-2001	2006-2007	% increase
Alabama	47	146	211
Alaska	30	28	-6
Arizona	151	454	201
Arkansas	95	106	12
California	1,539	3,465	125
Colorado	55	156	184
Connecticut	146	343	135
Delaware	22	56	155
District of Columbia	11	x	0
Florida	481	1,080	125
Georgia	273	551	102
Hawaii	42	76	81
Idaho	28	62	121
Illinois	499	945	89
Indiana	254	576	127
Iowa	33	56	70
Kansas	84	141	68
Kentucky	96	217	126
Louisiana	102	173	70
Maine	57	145	154
Maryland	232	414	78
Massachusetts	29	604	108
Michigan	415	735	77
Minnesota	240	695	190
Mississippi	31	64	106
Missouri	198	410	107
Montana	24	35	46
Nebraska	32	87	172
Nevada	59	214	263
New Hampshire	28	70	150
New Jersey	470	1,002	113
New Mexico	14	63	350
New York	664	1,306	97
North Carolina	273	450	65
North Dakota	12	20	67
Ohio	306	798	161

Oklahoma	**67**	**43**	**-36**
Oregon	**213**	**452**	**112**
Pennsylvania	**427**	**1,065**	**149**
Puerto Rico	**68**	**167**	**146**
Rhode Island	**34**	**89**	**162**
South Carolina	**88**	**216**	**145**
South Dakota	**23**	**47**	**104**
Tennessee	**83**	**251**	**202**
Texas	**738**	**1,629**	**121**
Utah	**79**	**167**	**111**
Vermont	**12**	**21**	**75**
Virginia	**198**	**484**	**144**
Washington	**122**	**323**	**165**
West Virginia	**49**	**90**	**84**
Wisconsin	**201**	**461**	**129**
Wyoming	**9**	**27**	**200**
Total	**9,483**	**21,275**	**124**

Table I
Children aged 6 with autism served by IDEA
Source: U.S. Department of Education

In February 2007, Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp, MD, MPH chief of the CDC's autism program was quoted as saying (1):

- "It is extremely difficult to accurately estimate the number of children who have an ASD"
- "Medical records often do not provide such information, and identification is often made by schools or education specialists"
- ""We don't know the causes of ASDs, but we do know that if we can identify autism and other developmental problems in children early, they can begin receiving appropriate interventions sooner"

Parents of children with autism would probably agree with Dr. Yeargin-Allsopp's first two points and most of them would gladly share their thoughts and ideas about the causes of autism, if she cared to listen.

In the same press release (1) CDC Director Gerberding was quoted as saying: "Our estimates are becoming better and more consistent, though we can't yet tell if there is a true increase in ASDs or if the changes are the result of our better studies".

No one asked Dr. Gerberding why, when many at the CDC knew that their own 2002 study yielded a prevalence of 1 in 150 among eight-year old children, the CDC approved, distributed and advertized an "Autism A.L.A.R.M" (2) in January 2004 that proclaimed that "1 in 166 children are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder".

Dr. Gerberding did not volunteer and it appears that no one thought of asking her why the CDC kept the results of the 2000 and 2002 studies secret for so long or if a third CDC study had been done in 2004 that was still "Top Secret" for undisclosed reasons.

In any case, if according to the CDC, the ASD prevalence rate was 1 in 150 on average among children born in 1994 and if the number of 6 year-old children with ASD known to the U.S. Department of Education indeed increased by 124% nationwide over the last six school years, then it is likely that among children born in 2000 who are now registered in U.S. schools, the prevalence rate of autistic spectral disorders is around 1 in 67, on average. Now that would be a catastrophe of unprecedented proportions.

Since the CDC 2002 study results were released in early 2007, no one in authority has bothered to correct the false impression that the "new" prevalence was current. Every day tens of newspaper articles and news items discuss the alarming increase in autism "that has now reached 1 in 150" and promptly reassure people that it is not related to vaccines and a mercury preservative. It will be interesting to see when the head of the CDC's autism program will reveal to the Nation that the prevalence of autism and other spectral disorders is *really* more than double that estimate.

In table II, we have compared the number of 6-21 year-old students with ASD who attended U.S. schools in the different states, the District of Columbia (DC) and Puerto Rico in school years 1992-1993 and 2006-2007.

STATE	1992-1993	2006-2007	% increase
Alabama	**68**	**2,178**	**3,103**
Alaska	**8**	**454**	**5,575**
Arizona	**199**	**4,001**	**1,911**
Arkansas	**30**	**1,581**	**5,170**
California	**1,605**	**31,077**	**1,836**
Colorado	**14**	**1,642**	**11,629**
Connecticut	**164**	**3,361**	**1,949**
Delaware	**15**	**576**	**3,740**
District of Columbia	**0**	**219**	**0**
Florida	**582**	**9,101**	**1,464**
Georgia	**262**	**6,815**	**2,501**
Hawaii	**52**	**859**	**1,552**
Idaho	**39**	**993**	**2,446**
Illinois	**5**	**9,398**	**187,860**
Indiana	**273**	**7,391**	**2,607**
Iowa	**67**	**1,102**	**1,545**
Kansas	**74**	**1,510**	**1,941**
Kentucky	**38**	**2,068**	**5,342**
Louisiana	**409**	**1,964**	**380**

Maine	**37**	**1,384**	**3,641**
Maryland	**28**	**5,130**	**18,221**
Massachusetts	**493**	**5,966**	**1,110**
Michigan	**288**	**9,723**	**3,276**
Minnesota	**296**	**8,613**	**2,810**
Mississippi	**0**	**880**	**0**
Missouri	**336**	**4,381**	**1,204**
Montana	**20**	**314**	**1,470**
Nebraska	**4**	**1,023**	**25,475**
Nevada	**5**	**1,638**	**32,660**
New Hampshire	**0**	**922**	**0**
New Jersey	**446**	**7,706**	**1,628**
New Mexico	**16**	**612**	**3,725**
New York	**1,648**	**13,951**	**747**
North Carolina	**786**	**6,462**	**722**
North Dakota	**9**	**335**	**3,622**
Ohio	**22**	**9,059**	**41,077**
Oklahoma	**31**	**1,598**	**5,055**
Oregon	**37**	**5,459**	**14,654**
Pennsylvania	**346**	**9,865**	**2,751**
Puerto Rico	**266**	**1,070**	**302**
Rhode Island	**19**	**1,018**	**5,258**
South Carolina	**141**	**1,977**	**1,302**
South Dakota	**36**	**477**	**1,225**
Tennessee	**304**	**2,881**	**848**
Texas	**1,444**	**16,801**	**1,064**
Utah	**105**	**1,959**	**1,766**
Vermont	**6**	**328**	**5,367**
Virginia	**539**	**5,813**	**978**
Washington	**476**	**4,677**	**883**
West Virginia	**101**	**782**	**674**
Wisconsin	**18**	**5,042**	**27,911**
Wyoming	**15**	**279**	**1,760**
Total	**12,222**	**224,415**	**1,736**

Table II
Children aged 6 -21 with autism served by IDEA
Source: U.S. Department of Education

There were 193,481 students with ASD, age 6 -21, registered in school year 2005-2006. The 224,415 students in the same category in school year 2006-2007 reflect a 15.5% increase over 1 year.

The U.S. Department of Education started providing enrollment statistics on pre-school children age 3-5 in 2000. In table III we compare those original statistics with the recent figures for school year 2006-2007.

STATE	2000-2001	2006-2007	% increase
Alabama	84	195	132
Alaska	27	x	0
Arizona	94	364	287
Arkansas	95	195	105
California	3,422	8,521	149
Colorado	53	249	370
Connecticut	152	453	198
Delaware	62	138	123
District of Columbia	16	60	275
Florida	847	1,799	112
Georgia	272	635	133
Hawaii	88	159	81
Idaho	28	78	179
Illinois	670	1,221	82
Indiana	456	798	75
Iowa	128	90	-30
Kansas	87	169	94
Kentucky	168	299	78
Louisiana	121	318	163
Maine	150	376	151
Maryland	371	606	63
Massachusetts	231	1,579	584
Michigan	631	1,272	102
Minnesota	345	1,241	260
Mississippi	34	96	182
Missouri	134	298	122
Montana	40	58	45
Nebraska	37	161	335
Nevada	89	497	458
New Hampshire	55	138	151
New Jersey	397	831	109
New Mexico	6	116	1,833
New York	2,244	1,520	-32
North Carolina	261	903	246
North Dakota	17	40	135
Ohio	326	410	26
Oklahoma	9	65	622
Oregon	429	848	98

Pennsylvania	**594**	**2,458**	**314**
Puerto Rico	**147**	**188**	**28**
Rhode Island	**48**	**130**	**171**
South Carolina	**121**	**392**	**224**
South Dakota	**35**	**89**	**154**
Tennessee	**153**	**481**	**214**
Texas	**1,108**	**2,443**	**120**
Utah	**58**	**247**	**326**
Vermont	**14**	**58**	**314**
Virginia	**222**	**581**	**162**
Washington	**64**	**514**	**703**
West Virginia	**14**	**38**	**171**
Wisconsin	**410**	**593**	**45**
Wyoming	**21**	**35**	**67**
Total	**15,685**	**35,043**	**123**

Table III
Children aged 3-5 with autism served by IDEA
Source: U.S. Department of Education

Here again, the number of children with Autism/ASD more than doubled in six years. Alaska did not report and the number of affected children decreased in Iowa and New York by 30 and 32% respectively. In all other states and in DC, the number of 3 to 5 year-old children with ASD increased significantly over the last six years with thirty seven states reporting increases of over 100%. New Mexico, Washington State and Massachusetts had the highest increases: 1833%, 703% and 584% respectively.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders clearly outlines the required criteria for the diagnosis of autism and autistic disorders. The manual's 4th and last revision was introduced in 1994. Since then, the diagnostic criteria of DSM-IV have not changed in any way. There have been incessant claims that the *increasing* prevalence of ASD is only due to the less stringent "newer" diagnostic criteria. We disagree and we have shown that indeed DSM-IV criteria are more numerous and specific. (3)

In any case, it is hard to believe that anyone would even think that in this day and age, school districts would be willing to pay thousands of dollars to provide specialized remedial services to children and adolescents who do not have a spectral disorder and distinct special needs. More ludicrous is the idea that these services would be perpetuated without a convincing reason year after year.

Table IV lists the number of students aged 6 to 21 who were registered in U.S. schools **since DSM-IV** and the *yearly increases* since then.

School Year	Students	Increase
1994-95	**22,780**	
1995-96	**28,813**	**6,033**

1996-97	**34,082**	**5,269**
1997-98	**42,487**	**8,405**
1998-99	**53,561**	**11,074**
1999-00	**65,391**	**11,830**
2000-01	**78,717**	**13,326**
2001-02	**97,847**	**19,130**
2002-03	**118,603**	**20,756**
2003-04	**140,920**	**22,317**
2004-05	**166,302**	**25,382**
2005-06	**193,481**	**27,179**
2006-07	**224,415**	**30,934**

Table IV
Yearly increase: Children 6-21 with autism
Source: U.S. Department of Education

In 1994, the population of the United States was estimated at 260,204,000. It increased by 14.7% to 298.444,215 in 2006. During the same period, the number of students aged 6-21 with autistic spectral disorders known to the U.S. Department of Education increased by 885% from 22,780 to 224,415.

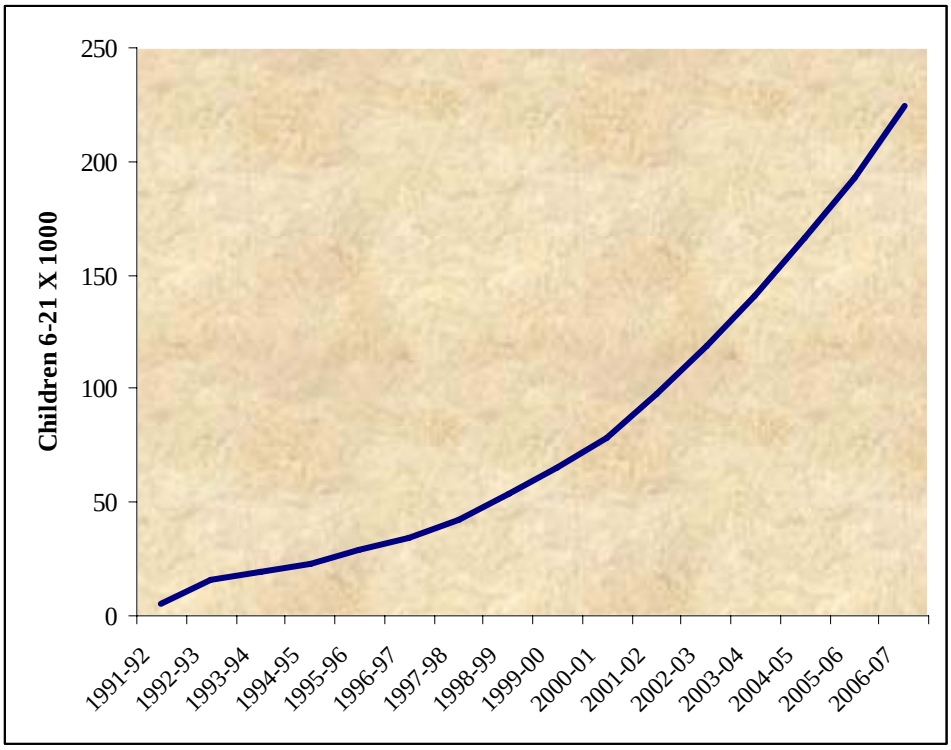
Table V lists the yearly increases in the number of children who are 3 to 5 years old and who carry the diagnosis of autism or ASD.

School Year	Students	Increase
2000-01	**15,581**	
2001-02	**17,032**	**1,451**
2002-03	**19,017**	**1,985**
2003-04	**22,724**	**3,707**
2004-05	**25,902**	**3,178**
2005-06	**30,276**	**4,374**
2006-07	**35,043**	**4,767**

Table V
Yearly increase: Children 3-5 with autism
Source: U.S. Department of Education

This 125% increase in children 3 to 5 years old in 6 years is 20 times greater than the percent increase in the US population since the 2000 census when it was 281,421,906.

The following graph illustrates the increase in the number of children with autism and ASD during the last 15 years, in fact since autism was listed as a separate category by the U.S Department of Education.



Increase over the last 15 years
Children with Autism / ASD age 6–21 in U.S. Schools
Source: U.S. Department of Education

We are fully aware that many do not believe the statistics that are collected yearly by the U.S. Department of Education on which we have based our reviews (and concerns) since 1999. We respect their right to do so.

We believe that the alarming trend that we have described must be halted and reversed before another generation of children is lost and thousands more families are destroyed.

Shame on them who have chosen to close their eyes, their ears and their minds to this tragic and serious problem!

References

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3. Yazbak FE. Autism in the United States: A Perspective
. J .Am Phys Surg 2003; 8(4) 103-108 <http://www.jpands.org/vol8no4/yazbak.pdf>

Data Sources

https://www.ideadata.org/PartBChildCount.asp	Age 6	2006-2007
https://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc8.asp#partbCC	Age 3-5	2006- 2007 - Table 1-2

https://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc8.asp#partbCC	Age 6-21	2006-2007 - Table 1-3
https://www.ideadata.org/tables29th/ar_1-2.htm	Age 3-5	2005-2006
https://www.ideadata.org/tables29th/ar_1-3.htm	Age 6-21	2005-2006
http://www.ideadata.org/tables28th/ar_1-2.htm	Age 3-5	2004-2005
http://www.ideadata.org/tables28th/ar_1-3.htm	Age 6-21	2004-2005
http://www.ideadata.org/tables27th/ar_aa2.htm	Age 3-5	2003-2004
http://www.ideadata.org/tables27th/ar_aa3.htm	Age 6-21	2003-2004
http://www.ideadata.org/tables26th/ar_aa2.htm	Age 3-5	2002-2003
http://www.ideadata.org/tables26th/ar_aa3.htm	Age 6-21	2002-2003
http://www.ideadata.org/tables25th/ar_aa2.htm	Age 3-5	2001-2002
http://www.ideadata.org/tables25th/ar_aa3.htm	Age 6-21	2001-2002
http://www.ideadata.org/tables24th/ar_aa2.htm	Age 3-5	2000-2001
http://www.ideadata.org/tables24th/ar_aa3.htm	Age 6-21	2000-2001
http://www.ideadata.org/tables/ar_aa2.htm	Age 6-21	1999/2000

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