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**Approach to the Autistic Child
in Emergency Care**

Patricia Matestic, Ph.D.
UW Autism Center Tacoma
EMS & Trauma Conference
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**AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER
OVERVIEW**



**“If you’ve met one individual
with autism, you’ve met one
individual with autism.”**

- Dr. Stephen M. Shore



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)



1 in 59
children living in
ADDM sites are
identified with ASD



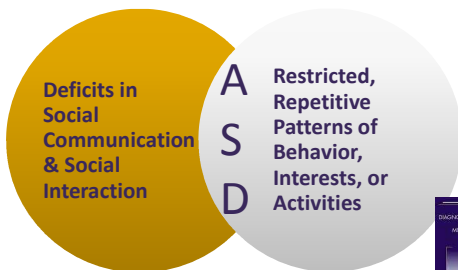
1.7% prevalence rate based on data reported
from 11 communities across the US

- ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder
- Males are 4 times more likely to be identified with ASD than females
- ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups
- Approximately 2/3 of individuals with ASD **do not** meet criteria for an intellectual disability

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>



DSM-5 Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder



Social Interaction and Communication


Behaviors Observed

- Communicate without language
- Not respond to their name
- Respond differently to greeting/questions
- Reduced eye contact, different facial expressions
- Elope
- Slow to build rapport

Symptoms of ASD

- Reduced sharing of interests, emotions or affect
- Difficulty initiating or responding to social interactions
- Deficits in understanding and use of non-verbal communication (eye contact/body language)
- Difficulty in developing and maintaining friendships

Adapted from Division TEACCH; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors

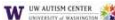
Behaviors Observed

- Pacing, rocking, flapping, vocalizing
- Physical aggression to self or other
- Large response to small change
- Difficulty with changes in staff, room, procedures
- Different response to physical touch/pain
- Fixate on specific item or topic

Symptoms of ASD

- Stereotyped or repetitive movements, use of objects or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexibility
- Difficulties with transitions
- Hypo or hyper reactions to sensory input
- Intense interests

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Common Co-occurring Conditions

Medical:


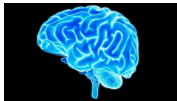
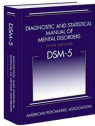
- Seizures
- GI problems
- Sleep problems

Cognitive/Academic:

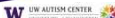
- Intellectual Disability
- Learning Disorders
- Speech Disorders

Psychiatric:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- ADHD

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STRATEGIES



Be kind, for everyone you meet
is fighting a hard battle.

-Plato



Common Environmental Difficulties

- Social situations
- Requirements to socially engage
- Noisy, chaotic
- High verbal demand
- Frequent demands
- Difficult sensory experiences
- Unpredictable



Preventative Strategies

- Goals of preventative strategies:
 - Proactive
 - Set the stage for success
 - Support coping with and tolerance of potentially unpleasant but necessary procedures
 - Improve quality of medical experience & overall health



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Preventative Strategies

- Environmental Arrangement
 - Physical arrangement – privacy, quiet
 - Visual supports
 - Address sensory needs: lighting, noise, crowds
- Autism Toolkit
 - Noise cancelling headphones
 - Sensory items/toys
 - Weighted blanket
 - Sunglasses
 - Snacks
 - Tablet
 - Social story



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Doctor Checkup

1 get weighed <input type="checkbox"/>	2 take blood pressure <input type="checkbox"/>	3 take temperature <input type="checkbox"/>	4 look in eye <input type="checkbox"/>	5 look in ear <input type="checkbox"/>
6 look in mouth <input type="checkbox"/>	7 take deep breath <input type="checkbox"/>	8 listen to chest <input type="checkbox"/>	9 all done <input type="checkbox"/>	10 great job! <input type="checkbox"/>

Tips for Improved Communication

- Talk less
- Allow extra time for a response
- Write out directions
- Tell what TO do rather than what NOT to do
- Ask close-ended questions
- Give choices for responses
- Unexpected behaviors = communication
- Lack of eye contact ≠ disrespect or inattention

RESOURCES

UW Autism Center-Tacoma




- **Clinical services:**
 - Diagnostic evaluations for ASD (18 mos – adulthood)
 - Speech and Language Evaluations and Therapy
 - Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services
 - In home and clinic
 - Social Skills Groups
- **Training services:**
 - Host professional trainings
 - Community and School consultations
 - Student Practicum Rotations
 - Volunteer Opportunities

For more information contact our Patient Navigator at:

Phone: 253-692-4711
 Fax: 253-692-4718
 Email: uwactac@uw.edu
 Website: uwautism.org



ASD Resources

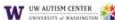


National Autism Support Agencies:

- Autistic Self-Advocacy Network
 - www.autisticadvocacy.org
- Autism Speaks
 - www.autismspeaks.org
- National Autism Association – Big Red Safety Box Program
 - BE REDY Booklet for First Responders
 - <https://nationalautismassociation.org/>
- AASPIRE Healthcare Toolkit
 - Resources for Primary Care Physicians and Adults on the Autism Spectrum
 - <https://www.autismandhealth.org/>

Local Autism Support Agencies:

- UW Autism Center – Training & Clinical services
 - www.uwautism.org
- FEAT – Family for Effective Autism Treatment – Ben’s Fund grant
 - www.feata.org
- WAAA – Washington Autism Alliance and Advocacy – legal counsel and insurance appeals
 - www.washingtonautismadvocacy.org
- ARC of King Cty – Parent-to-Parent - parent support groups
 - <http://arckofkingcounty.org/services/parent-to-parent.html>



Contact Information

Patricia Matestic, Ph.D.
 Clinic Director, UW Autism Center Tacoma
matestic@uw.edu

