

Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Who Provides Medical Care?

A Survey of Connecticut Primary Care Providers

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Purpose

To assess physician involvement in the care of adults with ASD and the need for training and support in serving this population

Method

Recruitment

- 1580 primary care physicians were contacted

Data collection

- September 2009-February 2010

Survey

- 14 multiple choice questions

Participants

- 376 returned surveys
- 30 did not provide primary care for adults
- 206 cared for adults, but none with ASD
- 139 provided care to adults with ASD
 - 113 cared for 1-5 adults with ASD
 - 18 cared for 6-9 adults with ASD
 - 8 cared for 10 or more adults with ASD



Results

Characteristics of Adults with ASD

- Majority male (71.6%)
- Majority aged 18-40 (71.9%)
- 48.5% lived with their family
- 36.3% were employed
- 17.4% attended school
- Highest percentage seen for general checkups (32.1%)
- Other reasons for visits to the doctor:
 - Mental health (21.9%)
 - Infectious disease (14.6%)
 - Metabolic disorders (13.9%)
- Services receiving:
 - Mental health (71.9%)
 - Job support (43.9%)
 - Transportation (43.9%)
 - Dental (38.8%)
 - Respite (11.5%)

Results

Training Experience and Needs

- 36% (45%) received training on ASD during:
 - Professional education = 18% (23%)
 - Residency = 13% (19%)
 - Post-residency CME = 15% (20%)
- 64% (55%) have not received training
- 55% (67%) would like training to care for adults with ASD
- 54% (64%) would like training to care for adult with other disabilities
- Preferred training mode(s):
 - Workshops/conferences = 45%
 - Grand Rounds = 26%
 - Web-based = 37%
 - Detailed reading material = 33%

Percentages in parentheses are from physicians who serve adults with ASD.

Significance

- Results show few physicians in this state are serving adults with ASDs. This leads to questions including: (1) What is the reason for the small number of physicians serving adults with ASDs? and (2) Are adults with ASDs accessing the health care they need?
- There is a lack of training by the majority of physicians on caring for adults with ASDs. What implication might this have on quality of care? Future research should look at quality of care and satisfaction of adults with ASDs in the care they are receiving.
- Physicians indicated their desire to receive training on caring for adults with ASDs and other disabilities. The field needs to think about how to train current and future physicians to provide quality care to adults with ASDs.

For more information...

A complete data report is on our website:

<http://www.uconnucedd.org/projects.html>

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