

Autism Speaks issues special report

April 26 2017

Autism Speaks today issued the first in a series of annual, in-depth reports on special topics in autism. Autism and Health: Advances in Understanding and Treating the Health Conditions that Frequently Accompany Autism gathers into one comprehensive report the most authoritative research and the latest guidelines on treatment and support of children and adults with autism spectrum disorder.

The last decade has brought tremendous advances in understanding and addressing the many physical and [mental health conditions](#) that often go hand-in-hand with [autism](#). Those conditions include epilepsy, gastrointestinal distress (GI), sleep disturbances, eating and feeding challenges, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. These issues can extend across the life span.

While each new piece of high-quality research adds to our understanding of autism, it also adds to the complexity of developing the best practices to address the diverse needs of the autism community.

Health problems attributed to autism may instead be symptoms of a different condition - one that is treatable. For example:

- Children with autism are almost 8 times more likely than typical kids to have chronic GI distress. The report includes expert guidance on when to seek help for "picky eating," which could be a sign of GI problems.

- More than half of people with autism have [sleep disturbances](#), which

may contribute to daytime behavioral problems. A model parent-education program teaches autism-specific sleep guidelines.

-30 to 60 percent of people with autism have symptoms of ADHD. Research shows that personalized treatment with cognitive-behavioral techniques adapted for autism may help.

The special report's Facts and Figures Supplement provides data on prevalence, screening and diagnosis, the cost of services and treatment, adult needs, and funding for research, among other categories.

"We now know more about autism than ever before, but each new piece of research paints an even more complex picture of the disorder," said Thomas Frazier, PhD, Autism Speaks chief science officer. "For the first time, our report pulls together the most up-to-date research on autism, and presents it in easy-to-understand terms. We hope people with autism, parents, communities, and [health care providers](#) will use this information to make the best possible decisions for their particular needs and to enhance the quality of life, now and in the future."

More information: www.autismspeaks.org/specialreport

Provided by Autism Speaks

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