

Not So Rare !

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Autism has long been assumed to be relatively uncommon, appearing about 1% of all kids worldwide. The figure was a rough estimate, based on the population of children who have already received the diagnosis of the disorder. The true prevalence of autism requires a study of an entire population – not just those who showed up at physician's offices.

NEWS: A team of researchers from Yale School of Medicine did in a six-year research project which provided startling results. They sought to screen every child age 7 to 12 in South Korea. From their sample of 55,266 children, they found the rate of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) was 2.64%. That is one case for every 38 children, a rate much higher than the 1 in 110 estimate in the U.S. While the numbers sound scary, the results do not mean a spike in autism. Rather, they simply reflect a more comprehensive collection of data. Better screening means earlier treatment and fewer children who slip through the cracks. A landmark new study indicates that autism is surprisingly widespread and not so rare.

Documents:

1. *American Journal of Psychiatry; Annals of Biomedical Engineering; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; Cancer. Time: May 23, 2011, page 19.*