



INFORMATION SHEET

Background Information:

Autism SA, which was founded by families in 1964, is a charitable, not-for-profit organisation, which provides services to individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. The organisation is funded through State and Federal Government sources, as well as through membership fees, special events and philanthropic means. Client numbers have increased from 580 in 1995, to over 4600 at the present time. In 2007/08 there were 580 new clients registered at an average of 48 per month. In 2008/09 there were 685 new clients registered at an average of 57 per month.

What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

Autism Spectrum Disorders, which include autism and Asperger syndrome, are developmental disorders, which are characterised by

- delayed and disordered social skills
- resistance to environmental changes
- repetitive activities and interests (to the exclusion of others)
- language disorders

Approximately, seventy-five percent of people with autism have an intellectual disability.

What are the causes of Autism Spectrum Disorder?

There are a number of possible causes currently being researched including genetic, biochemical, neurological and viral factors.

How common is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Autism occurs in at least 1 in 500 people and there are 4 times as many males diagnosed with autism as females. Asperger syndrome occurs in 1 in 250, with 10 times as many males as females being diagnosed. A recent prevalence study by Dr John Wray indicates that 1 in 160 school children between the ages of 6 and 12 have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Can Autism Spectrum Disorders be cured?

At present there is no medical 'cure' but early diagnosis followed by structured education and behaviour management intervention will ensure that each child achieves their full potential.

Effects on the family?

Bringing up a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder has a significant effect on the family. Enormous pressure is placed on parents, brothers and sisters as even every day social activities and outings can be extremely difficult and stressful.

Autism SA Services:

Services provided by the Association for people with autism spectrum disorders and their families include:

- Diagnosis
- Training & Consultancy
- Early Development
- School Support
- Spectrum Advisory Services
- Community Services
- Autism Advisor Program
- Early Intervention Panel Provider
- Member of Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium

Additional Information

Additional information can be found on the Autism SA website, www.autismsa.org.au, or by phoning the Autism Info Line on 1300 AUTISM (1300 288 476).