

NEWS

By the Numbers: Preschool antipsychotics, COVID-19 vaccinations, delayed autism diagnoses

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Welcome to this month's edition of the By the Numbers Newsletter! At *Spectrum*, we do our best to summarize the latest autism research findings. And sometimes, the best summary comes in the form of a chart or map. In this newsletter, we boil down interesting new research that is conveyed most succinctly by way of data visualizations.

Let us know what you think of the newsletter, or tell us about your own data-rich work, at news@spectrumnews.org.

Extended antipsychotic use among autistic preschoolers

In 2012, **316 children under the age of 6** from low-income households in Kentucky began taking antipsychotic medications. Over the next five years, nearly two-thirds of these preschoolers — 65 percent — wound up taking three or more types of psychotropic medications, including antipsychotics, amphetamine-based stimulants and antidepressants, sometimes simultaneously. Almost one-third, or 31 percent, took four or more psychotropic medication classes. And those with autism or in foster care tended to take the medications for longer than other children.

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