

NEWS

# Most autism intervention studies lack data on race, ethnicity

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Just one-quarter of autism intervention studies **provide data on the race** and ethnicity of participants, according to a new study.

The analysis, published in *Autism* in January, focused on educational or behavioral interventions given in schools and clinics to autistic participants aged up to 22 years old. It included more than 1,000 autism intervention studies published from 1990 through 2017.

Only 252 of those studies reported racial or ethnic data on participants.

“Honestly, I don’t think we expected the results to be this low,” says lead investigator **Jessica Steinbrenner**, associate professor of speech and hearing sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “We might know that an intervention is effective. But has it been used broadly? Was it designed for people from different cultures, and backgrounds and experiences?” Steinbrenner says.

Of the 252 studies that reported race or ethnicity, 204 included white participants; 104 included Black participants; 78 included Hispanic or Latino participants; and 76 included Asian participants. Just one study included a Native American participant.

Across this subset of studies, about 64 percent of all participants were white, 8 percent were Black, 9 percent were Hispanic or Latino and 6 percent identified as Asian. In the general U.S. population, by contrast, about **58 percent of people identify as white**, 19 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 12 percent as Black and 6 percent as Asian.

The prevalence of autism among 8-year-olds in the United States is also **higher for Black, Hispanic and Asian** children than for white children, according to a report issued in December.

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