



Zogby Conducts First National Autism Poll for OAR

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One out of every four Americans knows someone with autism, according to a poll released today by the Organization for Autism Research (OAR). The results show that autism, a neurobiological disorder that typically affects a person's ability to communicate, form relationships, and respond appropriately to the environment, may be far more widespread than commonly believed.

The poll of 1,401 adults, conducted by Zogby International, is the first national poll on autism. It showed that 26 percent of Americans "were personally familiar with someone who has autism." In the majority of these cases (37%) it was a friend or neighbor, but 14% were immediate family members. In another 11% of cases the person with autism was a more distant relative, and the remainder represented various business, community or health care contacts.

The high incidence of autism also appeared to impose high social and financial costs according to the poll results. Nearly one quarter of those who knew someone with autism reported that it had increased "stress on social and family ties;" 21% had had to implement some form of daily care; and 11% were suffering financial hardship as a result of autism.

"This shows that autism is no longer a disorder that can be ignored," said Michael Maloney, executive director of OAR. "Millions of Americans are being impacted. There is a tremendous burden on families, schools, treatment programs and social services. Now more than ever, we need research to determine the best methods of early intervention, education, vocational training and life care."

OAR is an organization formed and led by parents and grandparents of children and adults with autism. OAR's mission is to put applied research to work providing answers to questions that parents, families, individuals with autism, teachers, and caregivers confront each day. OAR accomplishes this by funding research studies designed to investigate treatments, educational approaches, and statistical aspects of the autism community. No other autism organization has this singular focus. For more information contact Michael V. Maloney, Executive Director of OAR at mmaloney@researchautism.org or (703)351-5031.