



The Redpath Centre Launches Provincial Youth and Adult Autism Spectrum Disorders Survey

The Redpath Centre in Toronto and London is launching the first province-wide survey since 1991 on the support needs and characteristics of youth and adults diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).

According to Dr. Stoddart, the lead researcher, this study is critical in identifying the service needs and profiles of youth and adults diagnosed with autism and Asperger syndrome, since the field of ASDs has changed so dramatically in 20 years. Adults with ASDs now show a wider range of abilities and challenges. Many adults who received services as children are left without supports when they reach adolescence or adulthood.

Dr. Glenn Rampton, CEO of Kerry's Place Autism Services, agrees: "A survey to identify the specific needs of adults on the Autism Spectrum is timely and very much needed. We are looking forward to using evidence from this survey to demonstrate the need for a revamping of services and to guide us in bringing it about."

This year, a UK study showed that ASDs affects approximately 1 percent of the adult English population. Dr. Stoddart is not surprised by the results: "The UK study suggests that there are many adults living with ASDs who remain undiagnosed. At The Redpath Centre, almost one-third of adults seeking services are looking for a diagnosis of an ASD, often Asperger Syndrome."

Many consumers and professionals argue that lack of services and supports for this group of Ontarians leads to heightened symptom expression, unemployment, and long-term dependence on family members and the health and social service system. "The data gathered from this survey will help families, individuals on the autism spectrum and professionals to address significant support and service gaps for this vulnerable and underserved population," says Margaret Spoelstra, Executive Director of Autism Ontario.

This research has received funding from Kerry's Place Autism Services, Autism Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.



For more information on *Adults Count! A Survey on Youth and Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Ontario*, contact the lead researcher Dr. Stoddart, at 416-920-4999 Ext 0169 or kevin.stoddart@redpathcentre.ca.

To participate in this study, contact Claudia Accardi at 416-920-4999 Ext 0165 or adult.survey@redpathcentre.ca.

About Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs):

- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) including autism and Asperger Syndrome, are a group of neurological conditions resulting in difficulties with communication and social interaction, and unusual patterns of behaviour, activities and interests
- According to the most recent data from the United States, as many as 1 in 100 children may have an ASD; a new UK study showed a similar prevalence for adults with ASDs
- ASDs have become more widely known and diagnosed in the last two decades
- The cause of ASDs is genetic, but there may also be environmental contributions; many individuals diagnosed with ASDs identify similar traits in other family members
- Without diagnosis, support and appropriate intervention, youth and adults with ASDs will struggle not only with the symptoms of ASDs, but conditions that are often co-occurring such as anxiety, depression, learning and cognitive disability, and attention problems