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## Bullying among Children with Autism and the Influence of Comorbidity with ADHD: A Population-Based Study

[Guillermo Montes](#), PhD<sup>1</sup>✉, [Jill S. Halterman](#), MD, MPH<sup>1,2</sup>

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### Objective

Bullying is a significant problem among school-age children. The prevalence and predictors of bullying among children with autism are not known. The objectives of this population-based study were to: (1) estimate the prevalence of bullying among children with autism in the United States, (2) determine whether the presence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder/attention-deficit disorder (ADHD/ADD) increases prevalence of bullying among children with autism, and (3) determine risk factors of bullying behavior among children with autism.

### Methods

The National Survey of Children's Health, 2003 (NSCH), provided nationally representative data for children ages 4 to 17. We used multivariate logistic regression and Wald tests to determine whether children with autism were more likely to bully in the presence of ADHD/ADD. Taylor approximations were used to account for the complex sampling design.

### Results

Children with autism had a high prevalence of bullying (44%, 95% confidence interval, 34–55). Parent report of ADHD/ADD appears to moderate the relationship between bullying and autism. Children with autism who did not have ADHD/ADD were not at greater risk for bullying compared with the general population. Children with autism and ADHD/ADD had increased odds of bullying (odds ratio 4.6, 95% confidence interval 2.4–8.6), even after controlling for household income, age, and gender. In addition to ADHD/ADD, living in a low-income household and younger age were risk factors for bullying among children with autism. Being female, however, did not decrease the risk of bullying in the autistic subpopulation.

### Conclusions

Children with autism and ADHD/ADD appear to be at increased risk for bullying behaviors.

**Key words:** [ADHD](#), [aggression](#), [autism](#), [bullying](#), [child](#), [national surveys](#), [prevalence](#)

<sup>1</sup> Children's Institute, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, NY

<sup>2</sup> Department of Pediatrics, Strong Children's Research Center, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, NY.



Address correspondence to Guillermo Montes, PhD, Children's Institute, 271 N Goodman St, Suite D103, Rochester, NY 14607.

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