

Treating Autism Survey Results

Our recent survey was completed by 220 people, the vast majority of them parents of children with autism. We were pleased to note that 3.4% of respondents were also on the Autism Spectrum themselves—not a huge number, we realize, but we very much appreciated their opinions and experiences. The results were very telling and have provided both valuable information and motivation to everyone at Treating Autism.

More than 95% of respondents who have used biomedical treatments for autism found those treatments to be beneficial and 24% found those benefits to be life-changing. It seems clear that implementing biomedical treatments for people with autism is a worthwhile effort.

In response to the question: **“If you have seen benefits from biomedical treatment please tick all those areas where there have been improvements”** we received the following results (Table 1), with 165 people answering the question:

TABLE 1

Aggression	47.9%
Anxiety	49.7%
Bowel problems (general)	73.3%
Communication	64.2%
Expressive language	46.7%
Eye contact	66.7%
failure to thrive	15.8%
Generalising/flexibility of thought	33.9%
Receptive Language	48.5%
Self-injuring	23.6%
Sleep problems	53.3%
Sociability	57.0%
Obsessive/compulsive behaviours	36.4%

In the comments section, people noted improvements in a wide variety of areas, including “bedwetting and sound sensitivity”, “joint pain”, “eczema”, “skin inflammation and constant itching”, “gut reflux”, “physical coordination” and “self-stimulatory behaviours and autoimmune issues.” A good number of parents commented on how their children were much better able to learn.

When asked about effective treatments, parents listed dozens and dozens, from hyperbaric oxygen and homeopathy, to methylcobalamin and melatonin. The wide variety of treatments listed not only highlight the options available, they also point to the fact that although our children certainly have commonalities, it is the individual child who needs to have his or her unique problems investigated and treated, and that there is no single recipe to follow.

Table 2 shows the most common responses to the question of which treatments parents had pursued and found most effective. For example, 112 of the total 220 respondents had tried a gluten and casein free diet and seen good results:

TABLE 2

GF/CF Diet	67.5%	112
Digestive Enzymes	44.0%	73
Gut treatment for yeast/bacteria	57.2%	95
Gut treatment for loading/constipation	35.5%	59
General Supplementation	62.7%	104
Cranial Osteopathy	25.9%	43
Chelation of heavy metals	27.7%	46

Although these results are highly encouraging, most of these treatments are not being offered or supported in anyway by the NHS. Contrast the results of Table 2 with the results of Table 3, below, where only 82 people were able to answer any part of the question at all: **“Is your child currently receiving NHS treatment for any of the following (please tick all those that apply)”**

TABLE 3

Aggression	13.4%	11
Anxiety	17.1%	14
Bloating/IBS	7.3%	6
Bowel problems (general)	37.8%	31
Diarrhoea	6.1%	5
Eczema, allergies, etc	18.3%	15
Failure to thrive/low weight percentile	2.4%	2
Food intolerances/allergies	11.0%	9
Immune system problems (including ear infections, repeated illnesses)	6.1%	5
Poor appetite	2.4%	2
Excessive appetite	2.4%	2
Listlessness	2.4%	2
Obsessive/compulsive behaviours	7.3%	6
Self-injurious behaviour	6.1%	5
Sleep problems	31.7%	26
Other (please specify)		33
<i>answered question</i>		82

Even if we examine only one area of this chart, anxiety, the results are shocking. Another survey question revealed that 147 respondents believed that their children “suffered from” anxiety, yet only 14 of those children were able to receive any sort of help with this problem on the NHS. Less than 10%.

Another related question revealed that more than 80% of parents felt that their concerns for their child’s health had not been thoroughly investigated by the NHS and we received 152 comments along the lines of “We’ve been told it’s just his autism” when it refers to such things as chronic

constipation, bloating, toe-walking, chronic diarrhea, self-injurious behaviour, and severe aggression . An astonishing 63% of respondents felt that the NHS professionals they had brought their children to were mostly or very uninformed about ASD. These results do not surprise us at Treating Autism. As parents, we have also had extensive experience in not receiving help for medical issues we knew our children were having. We turned to biomedical treatments for our children because they offered us real solutions to real problems.

There are thousands of children worldwide whose parents have chosen to pursue biomedical treatments. However, we are not suggesting you consider biomedical simply to jump on a bandwagon. Nor are we suggesting that these treatments will work for every child. There are no guarantees. However, our survey, our experiences as parents, the letters we receive from parents just like us, and the clinical experiences of medical professionals all over the world have shown us this: choosing and implementing safe and appropriate biomedical treatments can offer important, sometimes life-changing, improvements to the ASD child's life. We think this is worth investigating.