

# Summer Student Research Program Project Description

**FACULTY SPONSOR'S NAME AND DEGREE:** Walter Zahorodny, PhD

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**PROJECT TITLE (200 Characters max):**

**Motor Deficits and Delays in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

## **HYPOTHESIS:**

Even though motor deficits are not part of the core features of autism, they occur frequently and constitute an important aspect of the presentation of most children with autism.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Include design, methodology, data collection, techniques, data analysis to be employed and evaluation and interpretation methodology)**

Data from multiple cycles (2000-2022) of autism surveillance in New Jersey will be analyzed to determine the frequency of motor delay/motor deficit, describe the demographic distribution of motor deficit and to identify any association with intellectual disability or early interventions. Data are already available for the period from 2000-2016. The student will conduct data review for 2018, 2020 and 2022 cycles of autism surveillance and provide descriptive analysis of findings.

## **SPONSOR'S MOST RECENT PUBLICATIONS RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH:**

1. Mortality Among Youth and Young Adults With Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, or Cerebral Palsy; Kelly A. Shaw, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Dedria McArthur, MPH<sup>1</sup>; Deborah A. Bilder, MD<sup>2</sup>, Walter Zahorodny, PhD; et al; JAMA Pediatrics, February 9, 2026
2. Prevalence and Early Identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 4 and 8 Years — Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 16 Sites, United States, 2022; Kelly A. Shaw, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Susan Williams<sup>1</sup>; Mary E. Patrick, MPH<sup>1</sup>; Walter Zahorodny, PhD; et al; MMWR, April 17, 2025

**THIS PROJECT IS:**     Clinical     Laboratory     Behavioral     Other

**THIS PROJECT IS CANCER-RELATED**

Please explain Cancer relevance

**THIS PROJECT IS HEART, LUNG & BLOOD- RELATED**

Please explain Heart, Lung, Blood relevance

**THIS PROJECT INVOLVE RADIOISOTOPES?**

**THIS PROJECT INVOLVES THE USE OF ANIMALS**

PENDING

APPROVED

IACUC PROTOCOL #

**THIS PROJECT INVOLVES THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS?**

PENDING

APPROVED

IRB PROTOCOL # M0120010288

## Summer Student Research Program Project Description

**THIS PROJECT IS SUITABLE FOR:**

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS  ENTERING FRESHMAN   
SOPHMORES  ALL STUDENTS

**THIS PROJECT IS WORK-STUDY:** Yes  or No

**THIS PROJECT WILL BE POSTED DURING ACADEMIC YEAR  
FOR INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS:** Yes  or No

**WHAT WILL THE STUDENT LEARN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?**

The student will learn about the CDC-ADDM Network methodology for autism and developmental disabilities surveillance, the expression and prevalence of autism in NJ and the US, strategies and operations required of public health monitoring, including IRB approval, liaison with clinical and educational sources, basic analytic and academic reporting strategies.