

Awareness of Autism in Black and Brown Communities

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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects a multitude of races and ethnicities as its impact varies from person to person. ASD is typically diagnosed around the age of two to three years old since signs and symptoms of Autism become clinically apparent at that time. Increased reporting of Autism in local communities has surged from diagnostic tools and criteria. However, even with these advancements, the African American community suffers a delayed diagnosis of ASD. This issue poses problems for both the parents and children with Autism and has broader implications for the South Florida community; opportunities are limited for developmental services by a delayed diagnosis. This project is an ongoing Honors thesis, and a thorough literature review was conducted to identify this issue in South Florida. The research presented useful information at the state and regional level, not specific to local south Florida communities. Based on this lack of information critical to the problem, research was conducted using a survey instrument to collect and analyze the data. Initial analysis reveals two specific themes: lack of identifiable local resources and understanding of Autism. The results of this study will be disseminated to community partners in the following communities using an infographic to be shared with the at-risk population. The thesis has focused on building connections with local community partners in Broward, Miami, and Monroe County. Overall, the project identified criteria that caused a delayed diagnosis of autism, understood current community resources, and is developing an intervention to showcase a pathway for care.