DREXEL UNIVERSITY
A.J. Drexel
Autism Institute

Diana Schendel, PhD, is a neurodevelopmental and psychiatric epidemiologist with a focus on autism epidemiology. From 1993-2013, Dr. Schendel was at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where she served as CDC Science Lead for the Study to Explore Early Development (SEED), CDC's multi-site autism epidemiologic study. In 2013, Dr. Schendel accepted a position as Professor MSO in psychiatric epidemiology at Aarhus University, Denmark in the National Centre for Register-based Research and the Department of Public Health. Throughout the years, her research has been grounded in a public health science approach to developmental disabilities epidemiology and use of population-based data resources from the USA, Denmark and other countries in order to explore a wide range of autism topics: temporal and geographic prevalence trends, pre- and perinatal fetal, maternal and familial risks, and life course outcomes. Current directions include incorporating genetic measures of individual genetic liability in modifiable risk factor studies, investigating autism cross-disorder risk, methods for between-study data integration, familial and comorbidity risk patterns, and adult services and support.

Population-based Perspectives on Autism Prevalence Trends, Risk Architecture and Life Course

Tuesday, February 26, 2019
12:00pm-1:30pm

AJ Drexel Autism Institute
3020 Market Street, Suite 501
Idea Lab

The dramatic autism prevalence increase in the US and abroad which began about 30 years ago has yet to stabilize, and the autism prevalence 'wave' has been a significant stimulus for the search for autism causes. Two decades later, much has been learned about the environmental and genetic components of autism risk architecture – including the substantial genetic and non-genetic risk overlap across autism and other psychiatric disorders - but integration of these two substantial risk components at the population level is still in its infancy. Meanwhile the personal and societal consequences of autism continue to unfold as the growing numbers of autistic children and adolescents become adults. This presentation will bring together findings from Dr. Schendel's work across these three autism research areas – prevalence patterns, risk factor epidemiology, life course outcomes – as the basis for ongoing and future research in modifiable risk factors, such as: factors underlying sex-specific age of diagnosis, focusing on diagnosis into adolescence especially among females; tackling multiple, complementary risk factors while accounting for both familial and genetic factors, and investigating overlapping outcome phenotypes to elucidate risk mechanisms; and modifiable risks for co-occurring conditions and other adverse life course outcomes.

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