

Regarding the Prevalence of Autism in Malta

In 2012 (when the last official data on prevalence was published) it showed 1 in every 42 boys and 1 in every 189 Girls to be diagnosed with Autism. Those figures relate to children with a formal diagnosis ONLY, and we know worldwide at least 1/3 more children go undiagnosed.

Due to the official number in 2012 being much higher per 100 children than anywhere else in Europe at the time, a spotlight was put on Malta-

Malta's response since 2012 has been NOT TO KEEP ACTUAL DATA OF CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM! 🙄 Figures since 2012 have all been estimated and keep low.

In 2020 this article was published In Volume 32 of the Malta Medical Journal - [Autism A Hidden Disease In Malta](#). The article 'raised concerns' in the European Union – EU followed up with this response – [Autism and Education – International Policy in Small EU States: Policy Mapping in Malta, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Slovenia](#).

The University of Malta picked up on the Malta Medical Journal Article and the EU assessment of provision for Autism and completed their own study on the prevalence, diagnosis, treatment and provision for [Autism in Malta in 2020](#). Their report states 'The current prevalence of autism spectrum disorder in the general population is estimated to be 1 in 68 children. Despite significant advances in research and multiple treatment options, the management of the disease remains poor. Although there are governmental services and few non-governmental organizations working for individuals with autism, there is no official data available regarding the incidence and prevalence of autism in Malta.

Methods: This study focuses on the need of increasing awareness for autism spectrum disorder in Malta among the general public and health care professionals which would benefit a better understanding of the disorder for early diagnosis and more effective treatments. This was best provided through questionnaires.

Results: Our survey revealed that only a limited percentage of the Maltese population had some knowledge about the symptoms, age of onset, potential causes of the disease and treatment options for autism.

Conclusion: There is an immense need for improvement regarding the awareness of autism in Malta to estimate the exact burden of the disorder and make the latest diagnostic and treatment options available to the people living with this disease on the island.