

## Overweight and Obesity in the Pediatric ASD Community

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### Overweight and Obesity in Pediatrics

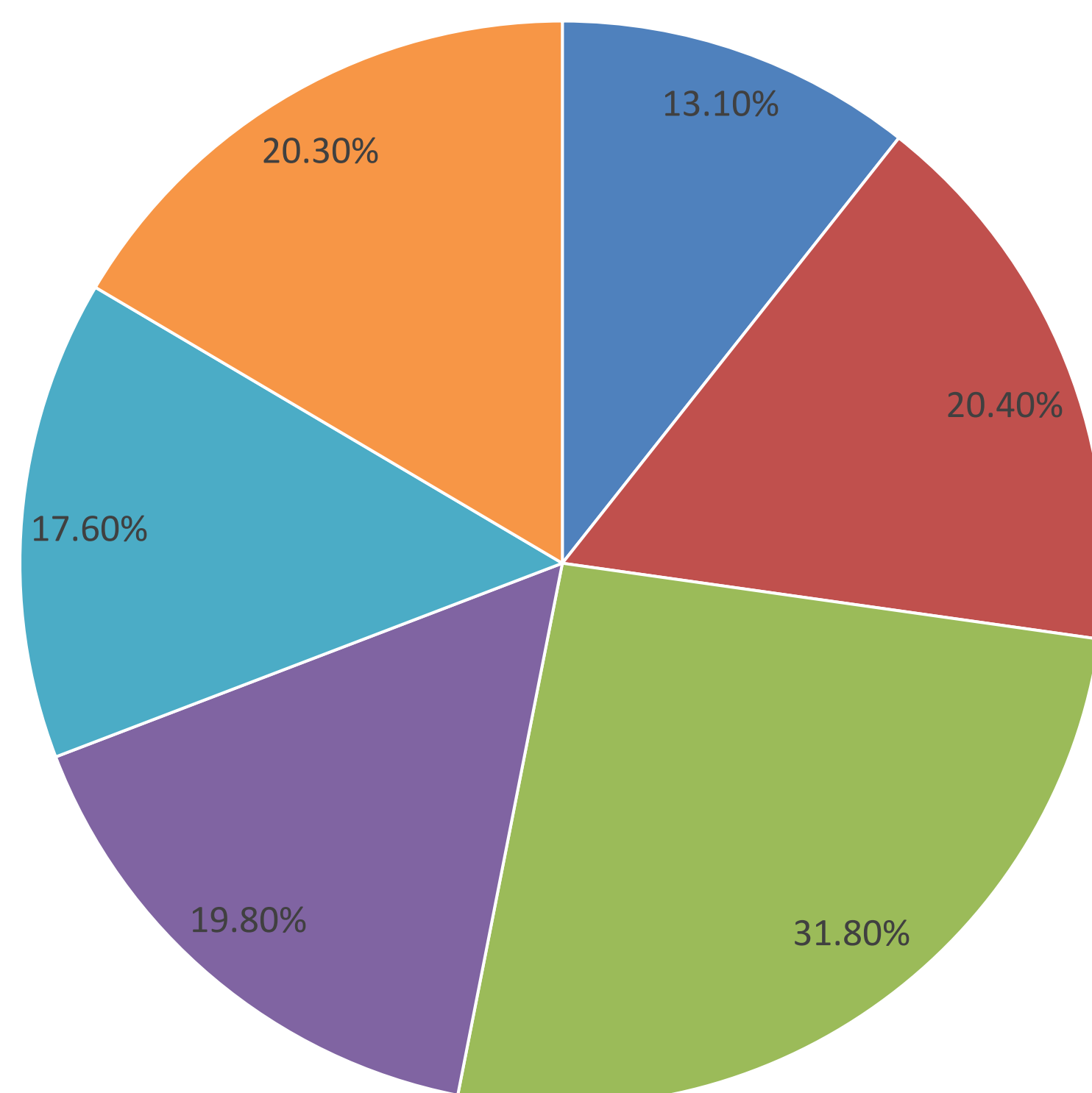
-Body Mass Index (BMI)

- Mathematical equation of a person's weight and height that determines if a person is overweight, underweight, overweight or obese
  - Underweight: < 5%
  - Normal weight: 5-85%
  - Overweight: 85-95%
  - Obese: > 95%

### Prevalence of US Childhood Obesity

- In the United States, 19.7% of children and adolescence are considered obese
- Children with ASD are almost 5x more likely to be obese

Percent of Adolescents Who are Obese



■ Developmental Disability  
■ Autism  
■ ADHD

■ Any Learning Behavioral Disability  
■ Intellectual Disability  
■ Learning Disorder/Other

### Potential Factors of ASD Contributing to Obesity

1. Restricted Dietary Habits
  - Selective Eating Habits
  - Food Refusals
  - Rituals
  - GI syndromes
2. Physical Activity
  - Delays in milestones
  - Postural inability
  - Social skills
  - Dysregulated behaviors
  - Increased screen time
3. Genetics
  - Fragile X
4. Medications
  - Anti-psychotics for behaviors
  - Side effects = weight gain

### Primary Care Clinician Views

- 62% of clinicians felt primary responsible for weight management
- Only 5.5% of pediatricians agreed they received appropriate training to manage obesity in the ASD population
- Majority of pediatricians strongly feel obesity is a significant problem for children with ASD

### Recommendations for Supportive Management

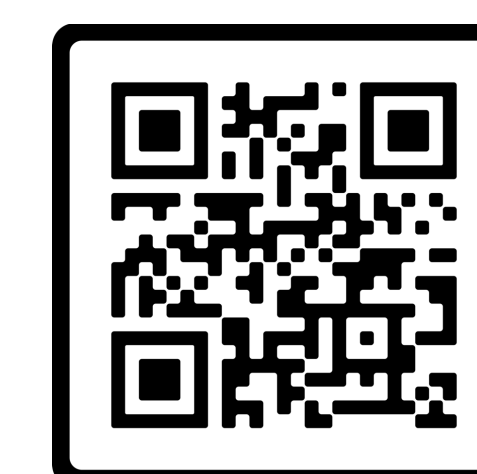
- Implementation of nutrition intervention programs at autism centers
- Comprehensive weight management programs (nutrition & exercise)
- Advocate for high-quality physical activity programs
- **Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health**

### Healthy Weight Research Network

- Children with ASD should be screened routinely for overweight and obesity
- Weight-related concerns should be discussed appropriately given child's age and developmental level
- Comprehensive assessment of obesity in children with ASD with elevated BMI
  - Eating and physical pattern
- Strategies for Children with ASD
  - Involve planning meals
  - Implement family physical activity
  - Limit screen time as a reward
  - Movement breaks
  - PE teacher involvement with IEP

**GOAL: weight maintenance with growth resulting in decreasing BMI with increasing age**

References:



SCAN ME