



Diagnostic Practices for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Australia



OVERVIEW

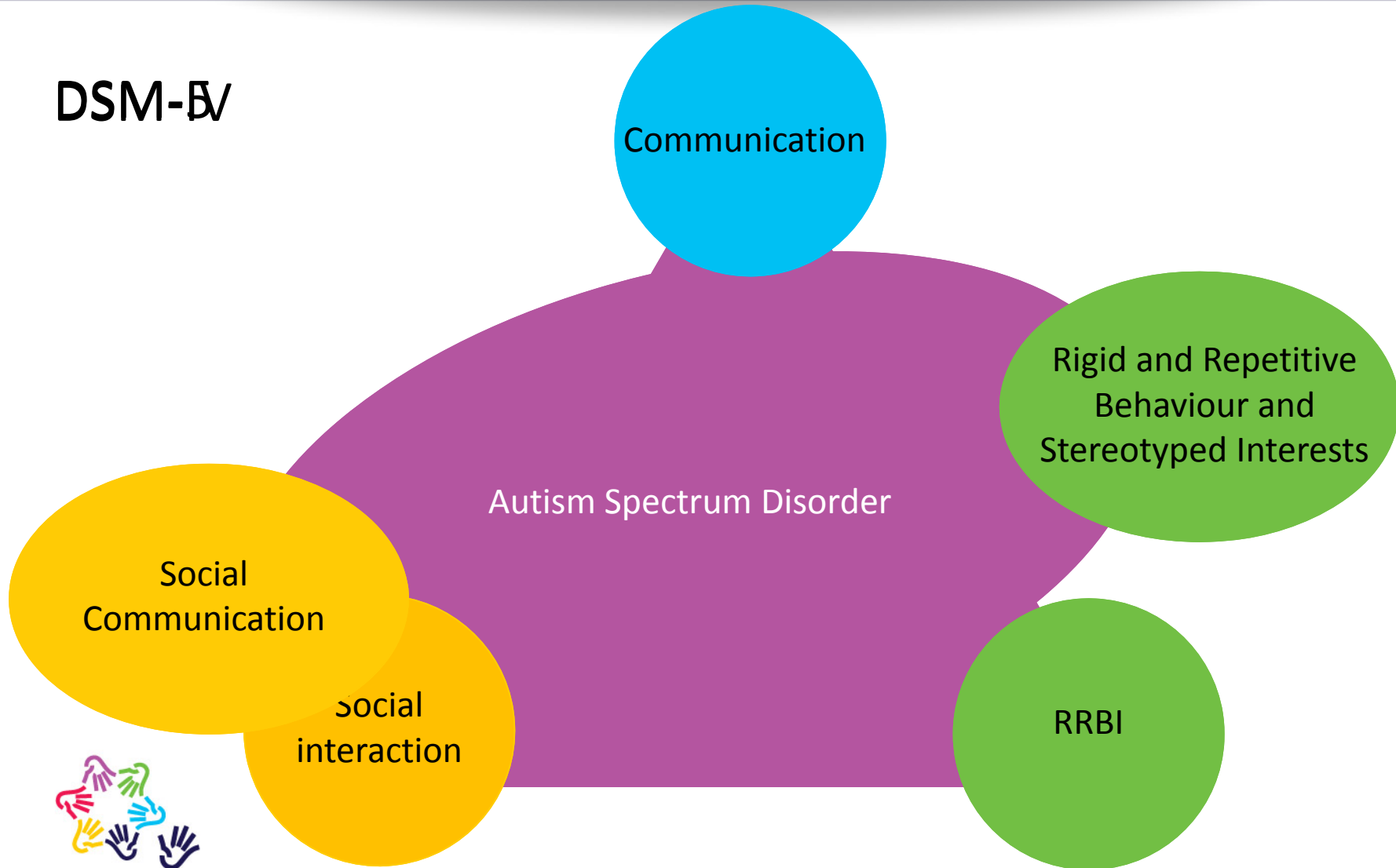
- Autism Diagnosis
- Autism Diagnosis in Australia
- Research Aims
- Method
- Preliminary Results
- Conclusions

AUTISM DIAGNOSIS

- Early diagnosis is critical for early intervention
- No biomarker for Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Diagnosis based on behavioural presentation of the individual

AUTISM DIAGNOSIS

DSM-5



CHALLENGES (Huerta & Lord, 2012)

- Heterogeneity
- Behaviours depend on non-ASD specific factors
- Overlapping phenotypes
- Changing presentation across the lifespan
- Lack of knowledge or expertise
- No single algorithm



AUTISM DIAGNOSIS IN AUSTRALIA



For children up to the age of 12:

- Paediatrician
- Psychiatrist (if there are mental health concerns)
- Speech pathologist
- Psychologist

For adolescents (12-17 years) and adults (18 +)

- Clinical psychologist
- Paediatrician (up to 17 years)
- Psychiatrist
- Speech pathologist consulted as required

Conclusive diagnosis for HCWA:

- State/territory government or equivalent multidisciplinary assessment service
- Private multidisciplinary team
- Paediatrician
- Psychiatrist

RESEARCH AIMS

- Phase One
 - Survey diagnostic practices across Australia
 - Document variability within and between states
 - Establish a baseline regarding diagnostic processes throughout Australia
- Phase Two
 - Experimental study
 - Establish the reliability of diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder



PHASE ONE: METHOD



Background Information

The first series of questions will ask about your involvement in the diagnostic process for individuals with suspected ASD. There are many different ways in which professionals participate in a diagnostic assessment for ASD. If you are a sole or private practitioner and conduct diagnostic assessments for ASD independently of other clinicians, please respond on your own behalf. If you work as part of a service that conducts team assessments for ASD, or part of a practice that has a central point for taking referrals, please respond on behalf of the service.

If you are part of a multidisciplinary team, please have only ONE person from that team respond to this questionnaire.

Please indicate below your basis for responding to this survey.

- On my own behalf
- On behalf of my service



Which setting would you consider to be your primary service (i.e. where you practice more than 50% of the time).

If you are evenly split between the private and public sectors (i.e. 50% of your time is spent in each setting), please select one option and respond to the remainder of the questionnaire based on this setting.

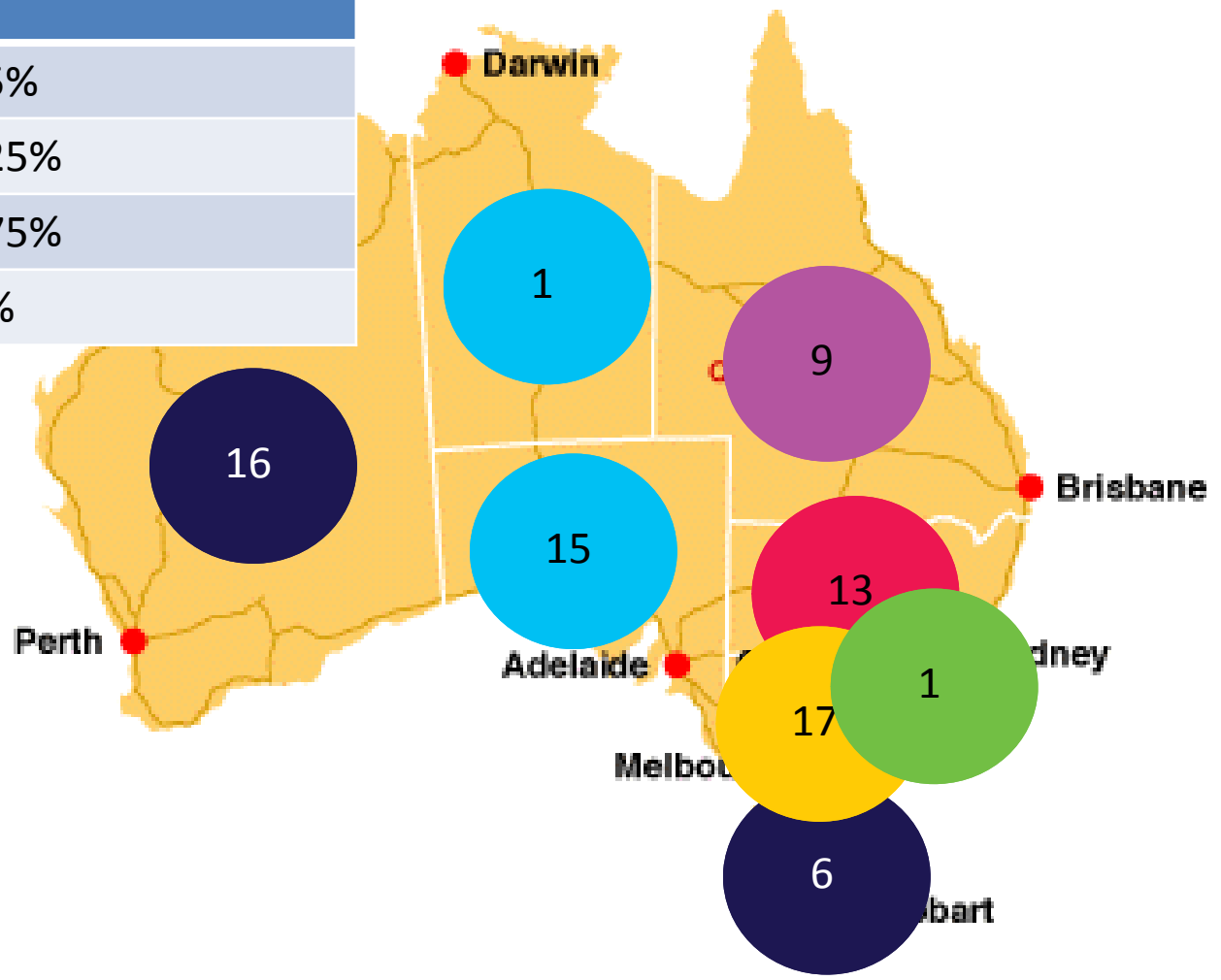
- Private
- Public

Are you currently involved in the assessment process for ASD?

- Yes, I refer individuals with possible ASD for assessment
- Yes, I conduct ASD assessments
- Yes I act as both a referrer and assessor
- No

PHASE ONE: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Profession	
Medical	17.5%
Psychology	56.25%
Speech Pathology	18.75%
Occupational Therapy	7.5%

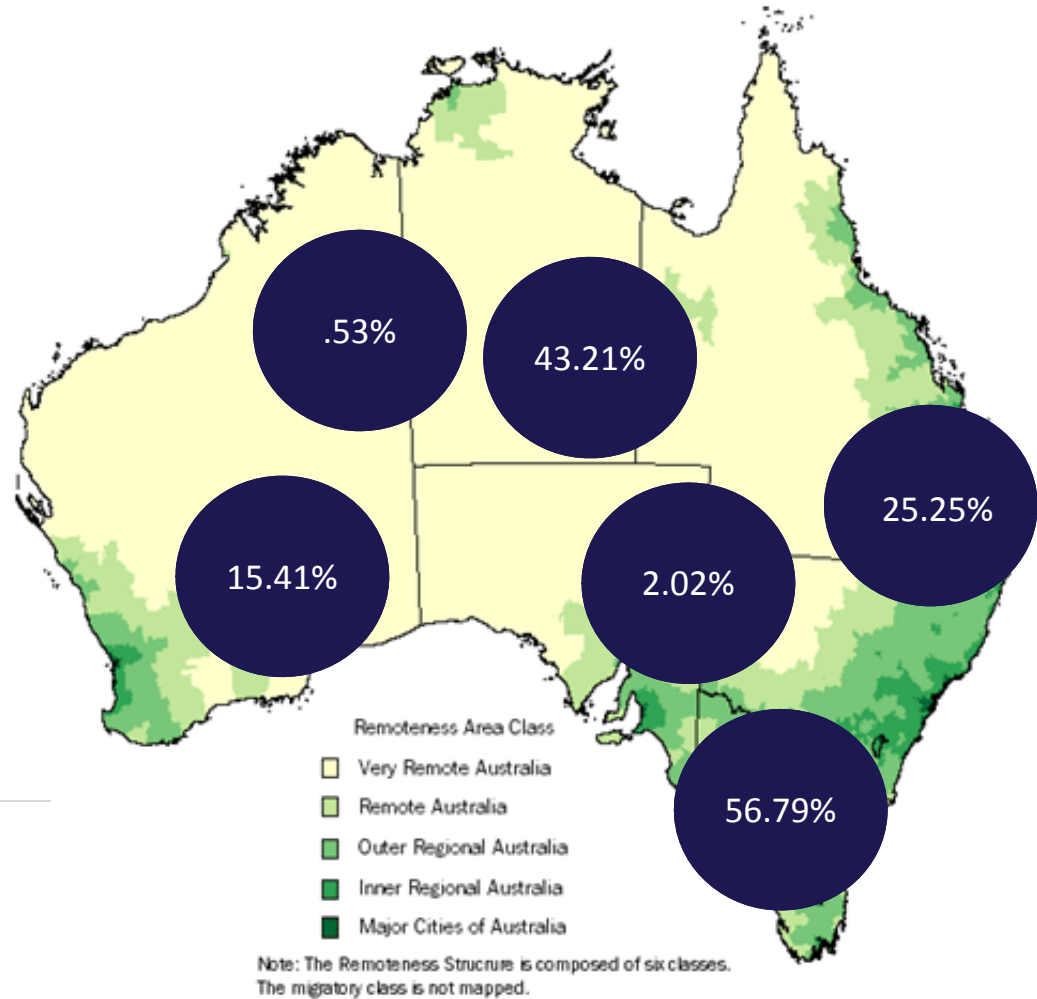
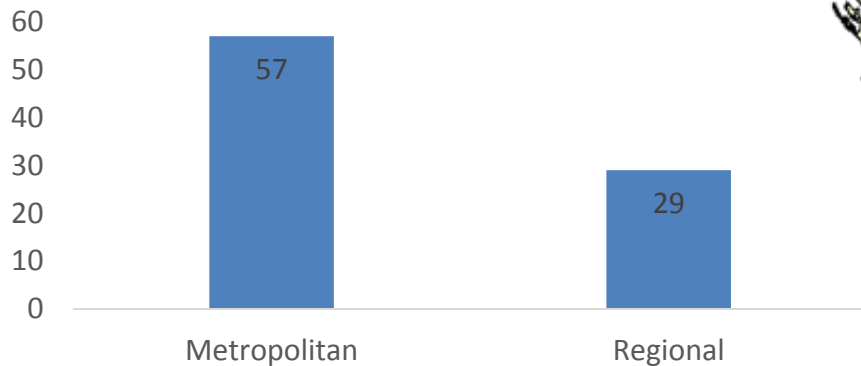


REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE ASSESSMENTS

Mean Waiting Time

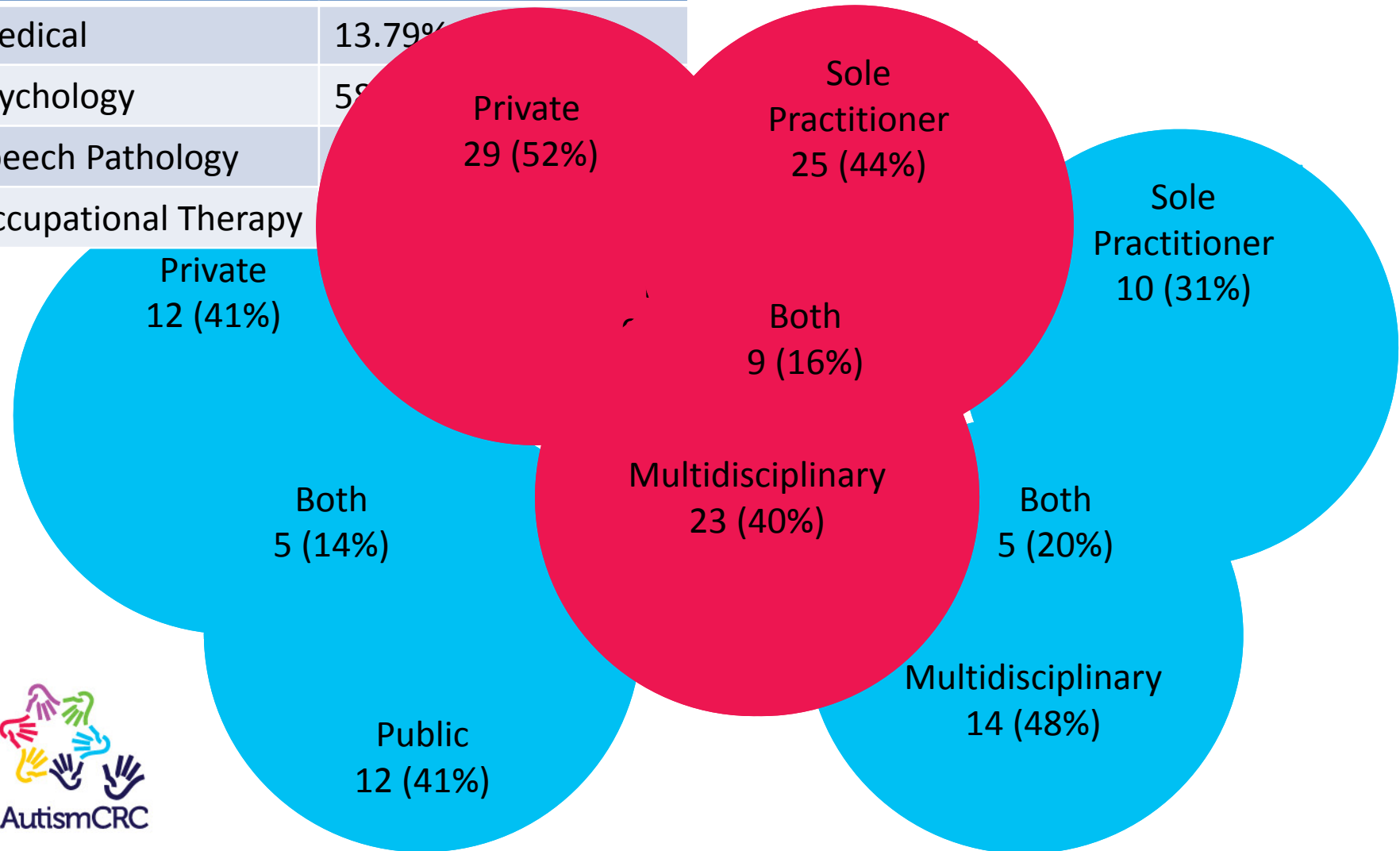
Metropolitan	13 weeks
Regional	23 weeks

Diagnosticians in Metropolitan and Regional Areas of Australia



REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE ASSESSMENTS

Profession	
Medical	13.79%
Psychology	58
Speech Pathology	
Occupational Therapy	



SUMMARY

- A large proportion of families seeking ASD assessment come from regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.
- Less diagnosticians providing assessments in regional, rural and remote regions..
- Long wait times for assessment outside of major cities.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Additional recruitment

<http://www.autismcrc.com.au/diagnostic-practices-and-reliability-australia-0>

- Further analyses
- Phase Two: Reliability of Autism Diagnoses
- Improved training
- National standards for Autism diagnosis



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Dr Lauren Taylor
University of Western Australia
School of Psychology

lauren.taylor@uwa.edu.au



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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Autism CRC
<http://www.autismcrc.com.au/>

