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Abstract: The release of DSM-5 has seen the most publicised change being the removal of Asperger Syndrome from the diagnostic criteria. At the heart of this phenomenon one needs not forget the individual who presents with the symptomology that affords them the right to be awarded the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Whether the individual is diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS); Asperger Syndrome (AS); or Autism, they are all part of the greater diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is the editorial mission of the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders (JADD) to “advance the understanding of autism, including potential causes and prevalence (e.g., genetic, immunological, environmental); diagnosis advancements; and effective clinical care, education, and treatment for all individuals”. A systematic review was completed of all articles published in JADD to highlight trends in knowledge and patterns of research from 1971 to 2012. Two thousand six hundred and eighty one articles were collated and examined based on publication year; first author name, sex, affiliation, and country; subject content for subsequent coding into research focus; and diagnostic terminology. Included categories were: Decade, first author sex and country; and research focus. First author sex has seen a changing of the guard where there is a shift from a male dominated led, to a female led research field. Similarly, there has been a significant shift in dominance of research from the United States to the United Kingdom and Canada, with an increase in the breadth of countries of origin since 2000, with 46 countries now being involved in the field. The primary area of research focus in JADD was increasing the knowledge of Autism and Developmental Disorders 45% (n = 1,206), followed by: diagnostics, 26% (n = 692); intervention 15% (n = 414); reviews of the literature 7% (n = 192); and families 4% (n = 106). Since the inception of JADD the focus has shifted from prevention and cure to that of early intervention, the successors of the journal have upheld the vision of their predecessors in providing a source of information to better the care and improve the freedom of those who share their gift of Autism and Developmental Disorders with their neurotypical counterparts.

Keywords: ASD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Content Analysis, JADD