As this Autism Awareness Month draws to a close, we take a look at the latest information and findings regarding the developmental disorder.

Innovative studies were published this April, including one that shows that the number of children ages 6 to 21 who receive special education in the autism category increased by a whopping 91 percent between 2005 and 2010. Interestingly, at the same time, the authors saw a decrease in children receiving special education services overall.

The report also goes into what causes autism. It says it is not related to mercury exposure from fish, coal-fired power plants, thimerosal, or dental amalgam, but the consumption of high fructose corn syrup. It apparently can cause mineral imbalances in the brain and can create an environment that can alter a certain gene expression. This raises other levels associated with DNA changes across the genome, and this, the authors say, can last from one generation to the next.

The study also states how kids with autism and ADHD improved when supplemented with glutathione and B12 injections paired with an organic diet low in fructose and no additives or added colorings.

Then there was a government-funded study published in the April 25 issue of Science and Translational Medicine that found an experimental treatment being effective at reversing symptoms of autism in mice. An April 2 article stated that researchers from the National Institutes of Health injected an experimental drug called GRN-529 into some mice they bred to display autism-like behaviors such as social deficit and repetitive habits. They found that the mice reduced the frequency of their repetitive self-grooming and spent more time around strange mice.

Further testing is needed, but Dr. Thomas R. Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said, "While autism has been often considered only as a disability in need of rehabilitation, we can now address autism as a disorder responding to biomedical treatments."

Other autism studies focus on genetics, the environment and the prenatal environment. And other studies coming down the pike are recruiting people. No doubt, researchers are working hard at better understanding and helping those who are diagnosed with autism.

Autism affects one out of every 88 American children. But let us all remember that those with autism are "special" because they possess talents others don't, and that makes them truly exceptional.