RISING AUTISM RATES REMAIN MYSTERIOUS.

Co-authors Irva Hertz-Picciotto and Lora Delwiche of UC Davis acknowledge that some potentially important diagnostic issues weren’t measured. Physicians may be more aware of the disorder, making them more likely to test kids for autism in the first place. Parents, for their part, are more willing to have their kids evaluated. But “the possibility of a true increase in incidence [of autism] deserves serious consideration,” they write.

One thing that’s clear: Autism is not purely genetic. Studies of risk factors are ongoing, and some areas hold promise; research implicates higher pollutant levels and infections in pregnant women, for example. Older fathers and increased stress in mothers may also play small roles.

Whatever the causes, the trend in California shows no sign of slowing.

—Clayton Simmons

HOW TO HYPNOTIZE YOUR FRIENDS
YOU WILL READ THIS

FROM CURING insomnia to treating pain, hypnotherapy is now serious business, but it’s still a great parlor trick. Here are a few tips from stage hypnotist Colin Christopher.

—Courtney Hutchison

Establish trust. It’s almost impossible to hypnotize someone who doesn’t want to be hypnotized, so build rapport with your subject—and get verbal consent!

Set the stage. Tell the subject what he should expect. By “prepping” him in this way, you’re actually telling his subconscious mind how it will react later, and it usually obliges.

Make contact. Tell the subject to take 10 deep breaths and release all the tension in his body. Use a soothing voice. Adding touch to the mix can deepen the trance. As I touch your arm, you will feel the muscles go slack, surrendering to relaxation.

Set a trap. Use double bind constructions to trap the mind: The harder you try to lift your eyelids, the heavier they become. Resistance is futile.
Copyright of Psychology Today is the property of Sussex Publishers Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.