

## **Maureen Durkin, PhD, DrPH**

MIND Institute Distinguished Lecturer Series – April 9, 2014

### ***Biographical Information***

**Maureen Durkin, PhD, DrPH**, is an epidemiologist, Professor of Population Health Sciences and Pediatrics, Director of the Graduate Program in Population Health, and Waisman Center investigator at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health. She received her undergraduate degree and PhD in anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her MPH and DrPH degrees in epidemiology from Columbia University. Her research interests include the epidemiology, prevention, and antecedents and consequences of neurodevelopmental disabilities and childhood injuries. She has collaborated in the development of cross-cultural methods for screening for developmental disabilities, as well as methods for surveillance of autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy and childhood injuries, and has directed international studies of the prevalence and causes of neurodevelopmental disabilities in low income countries. She has also directed cohort studies of neuropsychological outcomes of neonatal brain injuries associated with preterm birth and with metabolic disorders detected on newborn screening. Dr. Durkin is currently principal investigator of the Wisconsin site of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, a consultant with UNICEF and the World Health Organization on the measurement of child disability and early child development beyond 2015, and a member of the Institute of Medicine's Committee to Evaluate the SSI Disability Program for Children with Mental Disorders.

### ***Presentation Abstract (4:30 pm presentation)***

*Epidemiology of Autism Spectrum Disorder, an Emerging Global Public Health Priority.*

Despite exciting advances in our awareness and understanding of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), there has been relatively little progress in prevention of this form of neurodevelopmental disorder, or in the development of evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for people with ASD and their families. In addition, most of what is known about the epidemiology, genetics, clinical manifestation and course, treatment, and nearly every other aspect of autism is based on research in high income countries, where fewer than 10% of births occur and less than 20% of the population lives globally. This talk will review some of the recent developments in the epidemiology of ASD and describe opportunities to expand the horizons of ASD epidemiology and service delivery to include the 80 to 90% of affected individuals and families who live in low and middle income countries, as well as those in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in the US. It will also describe some of the cultural and financial barriers to progress, and make a case for incorporating concepts of the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* into the classification and epidemiology of ASD, with the ultimate goals to include not only primary prevention but also enhancement of participation and social inclusion of people with ASD.