Beta thalassemia is relatively rare in the United States, but is one of the most common autosomal recessive disorders in the world. The incidence of symptomatic cases is estimated to be approximately 1 in 100,000 individuals in the general population. The disorder is particularly prevalent in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa, central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Far East. Individuals in other parts of the world whose families are from these regions carry a greater risk of having beta thalassemia.