

## Systematic Reviews

### [Representation of autism in fictional media: A systematic review of media content and its impact on viewer knowledge and understanding of autism](#)

Media depictions of autism have the potential to have either positive or detrimental impacts on the lives of autistic people. This systematic review aimed to examine (1) the accuracy and authenticity of fictional media portrayals of autism (Part A) and (2) the impact of viewing such portrayals on knowledge about autism and attitudes towards autistic people (Part B).

### [Exploring the impact educational interventions have on nursing and medical students' attitudes and empathy levels towards people with disability. A systematic review](#)

This systematic review aimed to explore the impact educational interventions have on undergraduate nursing and medical students' attitudes and empathy levels towards people with disability. There are over one billion people with some form of disability currently. A growing body of research reveals that nurses and doctors display negative attitudes including decreased empathy towards people with disability.

## Studies

### [Modality-specific associations between sensory differences and autistic traits](#)

Sensory symptoms are a major source of distress for many autistic people, causing anxiety, stress, and avoidance. Sensory problems are thought to be passed on genetically together with other autistic characteristics, such as social preferences. This means that people who report cognitive rigidity and autistic-like social function are more likely to suffer from sensory issues. We do not know what role the individual senses, such as vision, hearing, smell, or touch, play in this relationship, because sensory processing is generally measured with questionnaires that target general, multisensory issues. This study aimed to investigate the individual importance of the different senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, balance, and proprioception) in the correlation with autistic traits.

### [Psychological, behavioural and biological factors associated with gastrointestinal symptoms in autistic adults and adults with autistic traits](#)

Little is known about factors related to the increased risk for gastrointestinal symptoms in adults with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), while the negative impact of gastrointestinal symptoms is evident. Especially, the relationship between gastrointestinal symptoms and psychological, behavioural, and biological risk factors in adults with ASD (traits) is unclear. Autistic peer support workers and autism-advocates also emphasised the importance of identifying risk factors, because of the high prevalence of gastrointestinal problems in people with ASD. Therefore, our study investigated which psychological, behavioural, and biological factors are associated with gastrointestinal symptoms in adults with ASD or with autistic traits.

### [Comparing Kidney Transplant Rates and Outcomes Among Adults With and Without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)

Improving equity in organ transplant access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is a topic of social discourse in mainstream media, state legislation, and national legislation. However, few studies have compared evaluation rates, transplant rates, and outcomes among adults with and without IDD.

### [Sex differences in friendships and loneliness in autistic and non-autistic children across development](#)

Autistic children have been shown to have less complete definitions of friendships and higher levels of loneliness than their non-autistic peers. However, no known studies have explored sex differences in autistic children's understanding of friendships and reported loneliness across development. Autistic girls demonstrate higher levels of social motivation than autistic boys and appear to "fit in" with their peers, but they often have difficulty recognizing reciprocal friendships during middle childhood. As autistic girls develop a more complex understanding of friendship during adolescence, they may begin to redefine their friendships and experience heightened loneliness. Here, we explored how autistic and non-autistic boys and girls define the meaning of friendship and report feelings of loneliness across development. We also examined their perceptions of friendships and loneliness.

### [Factors associated with mental health symptoms among UK autistic children and young people and their parents during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

The current study explored the role of pre-existing and pandemic-time child, family or environmental factors in the presentation of mental health symptoms of autistic youth and their parents during the pandemic. Participants were parents/carers of autistic children (Autism Spectrum Treatment and Resilience Cohort, N = 67, Mage = 9 years) and adolescents (QUEST cohort, N = 112, Mage = 17 years). Parents completed an online survey that asked about child and parental mental health, infection experience, and changes to education arrangements, family life, housing and finances during the pandemic. Pre-existing measures of mental health, autism and adaptive functioning were also utilised.

### [Programs to Prepare Siblings for Future Roles to Support Their Brother or Sister with a Neurodevelopmental Disability: a Scoping Review](#)

Purpose of Review: To identify and map the characteristics and outcomes of programs designed to prepare siblings for their future roles with their sibling with a neurodevelopmental disability.

### [Auditory Domain Sensitivity and Neuroplasticity-Based Targeted Cognitive Training in Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

Sensory processing, along with the integration of external inputs into stable representations of the environment, is integral to social cognitive functioning; challenges in these processes have been reported in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) since the earliest descriptions of autism. Recently, neuroplasticity-based targeted cognitive training (TCT) has shown promise as an approach to improve functional impairments in clinical patients. However, few computerized and adaptive brain-based programs have been trialed in ASD.

### [Short report: The role of oral hypersensitivity in feeding behaviors of young autistic children](#)

Feeding problems are common among autistic children and are linked to negative health consequences. Therefore, understanding feeding problems and factors that influence these behaviors is important for developing supports for children and families. While certain sensory processing patterns are commonly associated with feeding problems, less is known about the link between sensory processing and feeding behaviors in autism, as well as how parent behaviors and feelings during mealtime differ based on child sensory preferences.

## Reviews

### [Safe and wellbeing reviews: thematic review and lessons learned](#)

As part of the NHS response to the [safeguarding adults review](#) concerning the deaths of Joanna, Jon and Ben at Cawston Park, a national review has been undertaken to check the safety and wellbeing of all people with a learning disability and autistic people who are being cared for in a mental health inpatient setting.

This document sets out the themes emerging from the review findings.

## Statements

### [CBF Statement on the Safe and Wellbeing Reviews: Thematic Review and Lessons Learnt Report](#)

This is another report that tells us what we already know – too many people with learning disabilities are in inpatient units where they do not need to be, far from home. Their health needs are not met, their families are not treated as valued partners and oversight and review processes are ineffective. Over 10 years ago these issues were known and the Transforming Care programme was meant to drive change. That change has yet to be delivered.

## News

### [Leadership training for people with learning disabilities and autistic people](#)

Learning Disability England wants to find out what leadership or similar training there is aimed at or led by people with learning disabilities or autistic people. We also want to find out how the training opportunities include people from different UK minority ethnic groups or learning about the experiences of minority ethnic people.

We are putting out a call for examples to help us find out. Read more about what we are doing and what we want to know [here](#)

### [Neurodiverse people just need to be given a chance](#)

Readers respond to Nick Ransom's article that described the positives associated with being autistic.

### [The promise of telehealth in autism diagnoses](#)

On a snowy day in December 2022, Coraline Vazquez spent the morning playing with her parents, Dani and Gabe. In pajamas and sweatpants, the trio snuggled together on the floor in Coraline's cozy bedroom in the family home in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, a town of about 4,000 people an hour and a half northwest of Philadelphia. On a small table, a cellphone was propped up, its camera aimed at Coraline as the 2-year-old turned her attention to a pile of large plastic blocks spilled across the rug. One by one, she picked them up and placed them next to each other in a line.

### [Our praise for BBC documentary Inside Our Autistic Minds](#)

Caroline Stevens, Chief Executive of the National Autistic Society, said:

"We would like to congratulate our Ambassador, Chris Packham, on his brilliant and deeply moving BBC documentary [Inside Our Autistic Minds](#), which shares the stories of four autistic people, Flo, Murray, Anton, Ethan and their families.

### [New resource supports physiotherapists to make reasonable adjustments](#)

A new animation produced by the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists for People with Learning Disabilities (ACPPLD) provides advice for physiotherapists on making reasonable adjustments for people with additional needs.

### [New campaign to improve the lives of people with a learning disability](#)

The learning disability charity Hft has launched a new campaign, Our Voices Our Future, which calls to improve the lives of people with a learning disability. The [campaign](#) focuses on four key areas: social care, housing and infrastructure, the world of work and social attitudes. According to people with learning disabilities, these four areas propose some of the biggest barriers to leading fulfilled lives.

### [Number of autistic people in mental health hospitals: latest data](#)

The latest monthly Assuring Transformation NHS Digital data shows that in January 2023:

- In total 2,020 autistic people and people with learning disabilities are in inpatient mental health hospitals in England
- 1,280 (63%) of these people are autistic
- There are 200 under 18s in inpatient units that are autistic or have a learning disability. Of these, 95% are autistic.

### [Campaigners invite their MPs to diagnosis debate](#)

On Monday 6th February, thanks to NAS campaigners, 29 MPs joined a debate in Westminster Hall on autism and ADHD assessment delays. Our campaigners wrote nearly 3000 emails in just one week, reaching every MP in England. MPs heard how 120,000 people are waiting for an autism assessment, an increase of 40% in just one year.

### [Multiple and complex needs found in backgrounds of children deprived of liberty](#)

The multiple and complex needs of children made the subject of deprivation of liberty (DoL) orders have been laid bare in an analysis published last week. The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) found that children had, on average, 4.2 of a set of 11 indicators of need or risk, including mental health issues, disability, self-harm or going missing.

### [Do you struggle to work with adults with executive functioning issues?](#)

Do you struggle when working with adults who, while verbally articulate, struggle with carrying out day-to-day tasks or take decisions that put themselves at risk. [At Community Care's forthcoming Festival of Learning \(27-31 March\)](#), we will be providing social workers, occupational therapists and other practitioners with practical guidance in working with what are often termed "executive functioning" difficulties.

### [Self advocacy success as breast screening recall letters available in easy-read nationwide](#)

When one person advocates for themselves for better health care and improved accessibility, we all benefit.

### [Why does accessible healthcare matter? - Karl's story](#)

Clear, understandable information is important to help you make decisions about your healthcare. It is feedback from people like Karl that inspired us to launch the Your Care, Your Way campaign last year.

challenging behaviour  
**Learning Disabilities and Autism**  
Asperger Syndrome  
quality of life

research  
mental capacity  
intellectual disabilities  
health information  
carers



**NHS**  
**Mersey Care**  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Community and Mental Health Services

1 March 2023

[Train operator creates accessible travel simulation to improve inclusion](#)

Train operator Northern has gained a prestigious national award for its unique and innovative approach to improving accessibility on trains and at stations, including its accessible travel simulation and mobility scooter permit scheme. The Accessible Travel Simulation "Serious Game" by Northern won the Customer Service Excellence category at the Rail Business Awards last week and has been developed to support people who are anxious or need Passenger Assistance, including disabled customers and those with hidden conditions, to build confidence to travel by train.

[Supermarket launches affordable, adapted clothing range to support independent dressing](#)

A supermarket clothing line has launched an affordable, adapted clothing range to support independent dressing for children and young people with disabilities. Following the success of its Easy on Easy Wear school uniform range last September, George at Asda has created a collection of everyday casualwear that has been adapted to make independent dressing easier for those with additional needs and reduced mobility.