

Studies

[Clinical manifestations of children and adolescents with anxiety disorders with and without specific learning disorders](#)

Anxiety disorders (ADs) are common among children and adolescents and frequently co-occur with specific learning disorder (SLD). Approximately 20% of children with SLD meet criteria for ADs, while those with anxiety are six times more likely to have a premorbid SLD. The strong relationship between premorbid SLD and ADs underscores the importance of examining developmental trajectories and manifestations of neuropsychiatric conditions like ADs, particularly when SLD is present.

[Obsessional thinking and autistic traits are each uniquely associated with greater traits of gender dysphoria in clinical and nonclinical adult samples](#)

Research has demonstrated a strong relationship between autism and gender dysphoria (GD) and that this relationship could be explained by obsessional interests which are characteristic of autism.

[Supporting caregivers: Enhancing parental well-being through resources for autism care in school-based family counselling](#)

Despite the rise in autism diagnoses and the growing need for parental support, few studies have examined how a sense of control reduces distress. This study explored relationships between social support, sense of control, stress, anxiety and loneliness among parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), with implications for school-based family counselling.

[Digitally enabled, self-referral as an effective approach for young autistic people to access support: pilot study](#)

Limited resources in health and social care and long waiting lists for autism assessment are resulting in high numbers of autistic people not being adequately supported. We sought to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of meeting this support need through an end-to-end digital self-referral and digital mental health service.

[Caregiver burden and familial impact in Down Syndrome Regression Disorder](#)

Down Syndrome Regression Disorder (DSRD) is an acute or subacute neurocognitive regression in individuals with Down syndrome (DS), characterized by a loss of previously acquired cognitive, adaptive, and social skills. DSRD profoundly affects individuals' ability to engage in activities of daily living, making them highly dependent on their caregivers who must provide significantly more support than before the DSRD diagnosis.

[Pubertal developmental, body mass index, and cardiovascular autonomic function in children and adolescents with and without autism spectrum disorder: a four-time point accelerated longitudinal study](#)

The Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) regulates 'automatic' functions such as heart rate, and alterations may have significant impacts on health outcomes. Cardiovascular measures of autonomic function such as heart rate variability are of interest as biological markers in autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The interplay between the ANS and physical health establishes a need to examine cardiovascular autonomic functioning in youth with and without ASD over development.

[Confirmatory factor analysis of an identity questionnaire Among autistic adolescents and young adults](#)

Challenges during the transition to adulthood affect how adolescents and young adults (AYA) with autism integrate their autism diagnoses into their self-concept. A positive autism identity is crucial for their psychological and social well-being. This study examined the suitability of the Illness Identity Questionnaire (IIQ) for assessing autism identity by assessing its construct validity and internal consistency among 102 autistic AYA (12–25 years).

[Acceptability of a Novel Parent-Mediated Executive Function Intervention for Young Children With Down Syndrome in Italy](#)

People with Down syndrome (DS) are predisposed to challenges with executive functions (EF), which are crucial for adaptive outcomes and academic success. Early interventions targeting EF are therefore critical. The present study analysed Italian data on the acceptability, enjoyability and household implementation of EXPO (EXecutive function Play Opportunities), a novel caregiver-mediated intervention designed to strengthen EF skills in young children with DS.

[Female reproductive health trends and autism spectrum disorder prevalence between 2000 and 2024](#)

This study investigates the correlation between female reproductive health parameters and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) prevalence from 2000 to 2024. The analysis used advanced statistical and machine learning models to identify trends in key reproductive indicators and their association with ASD prevalence.

[Abnormalities in brain complexity in children with autism spectrum disorder: a sleeping state functional MRI study](#)

The theory of complexity loss in neurodivergent brain is widely acknowledged. However, the findings of autism research do not seem to align well with this theory. We aim to investigate the brain complexity in children with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) compared with the TD (Typical Developed) children in sleeping state.

[Altered processing of consecutive changeable emotional voices in individuals with autistic traits: behavioral and ERP studies](#)

Similar to individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), individuals with autistic traits are expected to exhibit alterations in emotion recognition. However, many previous studies using single emotional stimuli did not observe these alterations in such individuals. Given that consecutive changeable emotional stimuli are more common in social interactions than single emotional stimuli, impaired mental processing of consecutive changeable emotions may be a key factor underlying the social interaction challenges faced by these individuals.

[A randomized controlled trial of the effects of dog-assisted versus robot dog-assisted therapy for children with autism or Down syndrome](#)

Research with controlled or crossover designs in animal-assisted therapy have largely used control groups receiving no treatment or treatment as usual, which can potentially inflate the effects of these interventions. It is therefore not always clear whether this type of therapy has a positive effect on, for example, the social skills of children with special support needs.

Study Summaries

[Diagnostic overshadowing in PTSD and autism: what do we know about trauma in ASD?](#)

The majority of people will, at some point, experience a traumatic event, but only 3.9-5.6% will develop a post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD (WHO, 2024).

Reports

[Monitoring the Mental Health Act: 2023 to 2024](#)

The Care Quality Commission's annual report on the use of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Guidance

[NHS continuing healthcare previously unassessed periods of care \(easy read\)](#)

Easy read version of guidance about NHS continuing healthcare previously unassessed periods of care requests.

News

[An update on the Mental Health Bill's passage through Parliament](#)

Tim Spencer-Lane summarises the key areas of debate considered by the House of Lords committee tasked with scrutinising the bill to reform the Mental Health Act.

[Many disabled people face benefit cuts in government plan to save over £5bn from welfare system](#)

Charities sound alarm over plans to tighten access to personal independence payment and halve incapacity benefit rates, but government insists measures will boost employment.

[Changes to benefits](#)

Read our summary of how the Government's cuts will impact people with a severe learning disability and their families.

[Lack of accessible formats for welfare consultation is height of "contempt"](#)

A coalition of disability charities has said it is the "height of contempt" that the government is asking disabled people to consult on life-changing new welfare benefit laws without providing accessible formats.

[Our response to the Government's proposed changes to the welfare system](#)

Tim Nicholls, Assistant Director of Policy, Research and Strategy at the National Autistic Society, said: "Thousands of autistic people who rely on benefits to live their life will be really scared about what today's announcement will mean for them; especially the proposed changes making it harder to get PIP."

[What Matters to Me Launch at the House of Commons](#)

Westminster launch of innovative project 'What Matters to Me' in front of wide range of stakeholders.



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

The latest monthly [Assuring Transformation NHS Digital data](#) shows that in February 2025:

- In total 2,055 autistic people and people with a learning disability are in inpatient mental health hospitals in England
- 1,460 (71%) of these people are autistic
- There are 215 under 18s in inpatient units that are autistic or have a learning disability. Of these, 96% are autistic.

[Autistic children and young carers are missing out on too much school](#)

The number of autistic people who are classed as “severely absent pupils” from school has more than doubled since 2019, according to new data from the Department for Education.

[Parents of autistic children are being pushed into poverty, new survey finds](#)

Parents of autistic children are being pushed into poverty and forced to leave work because they are not receiving enough educational support for their children, according to new research from Ambitious about Autism.

[LDE conference: delegates say time for voices to be even louder](#)

Building good lives for people with learning disabilities was the theme of this year's Learning Disability England (LDE) annual conference in Manchester.

[Autistic Lioness, Lucy Bronze MBE is our new Celebrity Ambassador](#)

England women's footballer Lucy Bronze MBE, who has recently revealed she is autistic, is joining our charity as a Celebrity Ambassador to champion autism acceptance.

[Access denied: MPs call for overhaul of laws, strategy and attitudes to get transport working for disabled people](#)

A new Transport Committee report uncovers the harsh daily reality experienced by disabled people when using transport services and calls for an overhaul of the regulatory system that should ensure they are supported and protected from discrimination.