

Systematic Review

[Fever during pregnancy as a risk factor for neurodevelopmental disorders: results from a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)

Additional evidence supported the association between fever during pregnancy and increased risk for NDD in offspring. Careful monitoring should be considered for children born from mothers with a febrile episode during pregnancy (specifically during the first trimester).

Randomised Controlled Trial

[Effect of Preemptive Intervention on Developmental Outcomes Among Infants Showing Early Signs of Autism: A Randomized Clinical Trial of Outcomes to Diagnosis](#)

Receipt of a preemptive intervention for ASD from age 9 months among a sample of infants showing early signs of ASD led to reduced ASD symptom severity across early childhood and reduced the odds of an ASD diagnosis at age 3 years.

Guidance

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing in adult care homes](#)

This page records changes to policy when there is one case of COVID-19 in a care home; to LFT testing frequency; when there are 2 or more cases of COVID-19 in a care home; and ending outbreak restrictions.

Studies

[Autistic individuals are more likely to be LGBTQ+](#)

New research from the University of Cambridge suggests that autistic individuals are less likely to identify as heterosexual and more likely to identify with a diverse range of sexual orientations than non-autistic individuals. The study was published in the journal Autism Research and found that when comparing autistic females and males directly, autistic females were more likely to be sexually active; more likely to identify as asexual, bisexual, and 'other' sexuality; and were less likely to identify as heterosexual.

[Analysis ups estimate of spontaneous mutations' role in autism](#)

Spontaneous genetic mutations contribute to autism in 30 to 39 percent of all people with the condition, an increase over previous estimates, according to a new study. The rate is even higher — 52 to 67 percent — among autistic children whose siblings do not also have the condition.

[The search for a link between autism and neurodegenerative conditions](#)

The study is one of a handful that have found higher-than-average rates of neurodegenerative conditions in autistic adults. The risk estimates for Parkinson's disease in autistic people range from 15 to 20 percent, compared with about 1 percent in the general population. Similarly, the prevalence of dementia is less than 1 percent in non-autistic people but about 4 percent in those with autism.

[No link between epidurals and autism, two studies confirm](#)

The epidural anaesthesia commonly given to pregnant people during labour is not linked to autism in children, according to two studies published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Reports

[Digital LifeLine – interim report published](#)

Learning Disability England has been working in partnership with Good Things Foundation and AbilityNet, VODG and other disability and digital inclusion organisations and community partners to help people with learning disabilities get online.

[Coronavirus and people with learning disabilities research – Wave 3 findings](#)

The coronavirus and people with learning disabilities research latest findings for Wave 3 have now been published. The research findings provide lots more important information for us all in how we live with Covid inclusively and not leave people out.

Statistics

[New figures showing safeguarding of vulnerable adults in 2020-21 are published](#)

The latest statistics on safeguarding concerns reported to local authorities in England have been published by NHS Digital.

Reviews

[Review of Scottish Autism Strategy criticises lack of progress](#)

An independent review of the Scottish Government and COSLAs 10-year Autism Strategy has been published. The review concludes: "After ten years, valuable resources have been created and new and additional services delivered. However, real change for many autistic people, both in how they engage with services and in how they are supported to live productive lives, is not as evident. To have a greater impact, the services and support need to have greater reach, become embedded and be sustained."

[Government to tackle overprescribing of medicines in people with disabilities](#)

A new government review has called for more research to investigate the reasons why overprescribing of medicines disproportionately affects vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities. The [review](#) found that problematic polypharmacy, the concurrent use of multiple medicines for one person, is one of the main consequences of overprescribing. People who are taking multiple medicines are more likely to have worse health conditions and as they have been taking medicines for longer, face more difficult decisions about treatment.

Resource

[New screen assesses suicidality in autistic adults](#)

The tool, called the Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire-Autism Spectrum Conditions (SBQ-ASC), is [freely available online](#) and could help spur research on suicide and autism.

Project

[Equal Treatment: Challenging racism and health inequalities through strengthening self-advocacy and peer support](#)

Learning Disability England are launching a new project about peer support and self-advocacy groups led by or including people with a learning disability from minority ethnic groups. This project is to help more people know about their rights to help them get equal treatment.

Training

[Learning disability charity launch online training course on personalised technology](#)

A new online training course on personalised technology has recently been launched by a national charity that supports adults with learning disabilities. The training is available to both individuals and organisations.

News

[Autism Education Trust \(AET\) updates training resources for education professionals](#)

Autism Education Trust (AET), a not-for-profit organisation offering autism education training and resources for education professionals, has updated its Autism Standards and Competency Framework. The new Competency Framework sets out the knowledge and skills needed by professionals who work with autistic children and young people in educational settings. The frameworks are presented as a self-evaluation tool that practitioners can use to rate their current practice and understanding against a set of descriptors. The materials were developed in collaboration with those who have lived experience.

[New additional learning needs system comes into force in Wales](#)

This month the Welsh Government begins a phased roll-out of a new system of support for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN).

[Atlas maps gene activity, accessibility in developing brain](#)

A new atlas profiles gene expression and the accessibility of DNA in individual cells across the developing human cerebral cortex during mid-gestation, the period when many autism-linked genes are active. The resource could help researchers better understand the molecular underpinnings of cortical development and decipher the effects of rare autism-linked mutations located between genes.

[How to protect vulnerable autistic adults during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Although individuals and families can take action to reduce risk from COVID-19 among adults with developmental and mental health conditions, it is also important that employers, local and state health departments and federal spokespeople help to protect these vulnerable populations through policies encouraging vaccination and through these additional mitigation measures.