

Studies

[Autism-related language preferences of English-speaking individuals across the globe: A mixed methods investigation](#)

Over the past two decades, there have been increasing discussions around which terms should be used to talk about autism. Whilst these discussions have largely revolved around the suitability of identity-first language and person-first language, more recently this debate has broadened to encompass other autism-related terminology (e.g., 'high-functioning'). To date, academic studies have not investigated the language preferences of autistic individuals outside of the United Kingdom or Australia, nor have they compared levels of endorsement across countries. Hence, the current study adopted a mixed-methods approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative techniques, to explore the linguistic preferences of 654 English-speaking autistic adults across the globe.

[Distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic for children with ADHD and/or ASD: a European multi-center study examining the role of executive function deficits and age](#)

One of the COVID-19 pandemic consequences that has affected families the most is school lockdowns. Some studies have shown that distance learning has been especially challenging for families with a child with neurodevelopmental disorders such as ADHD or ASD. However, previous studies have not taken the heterogeneity of these disorders into account. The aim of the present study was therefore to investigate differences between families with a child with ADHD, ASD, or both conditions, and to examine the role of underlying deficits in executive functioning (EF) in both children and parents in relation to negative and positive effects of distance learning.

[Infant excitation/inhibition balance interacts with executive attention to predict autistic traits in childhood](#)

Autism is proposed to be characterised by an atypical balance of cortical excitation and inhibition (E/I). However, most studies have examined E/I alterations in older autistic individuals, meaning that findings could in part reflect homeostatic compensation. To assess the directionality of effects, it is necessary to examine alterations in E/I balance early in the lifespan before symptom emergence. Recent explanatory frameworks have argued that it is also necessary to consider how early risk features interact with later developing modifier factors to predict autism outcomes.

[Peer researchers' experiences of a co-produced research project on supported decision-making](#)

Making decisions about your own life is a key aspect of independence, freedom, human rights and social justice. There are disabled people who, without support, would be assessed as incapable of making certain decisions but with the appropriate support are capable of making those decisions and so to not provide that support infringes their rights, undermines their autonomy and reinforces their exclusion from society. However, there is limited research evidence available about disabled people's experiences of the range of approaches provided to support decision-making. This article will explore the experiences of four peer researchers who co-produced a research project on how people have, or have not been, supported to make their own decisions. Two of the peer researchers have experience of mental health problems and two are people with an intellectual disability. The article refers to peer research because its subject matter is the relevant lived experience of people. Peer research is therefore an approach within the broader areas of participatory research and co-production.

[Effects of COVID-19 related physical inactivity on motor skills in children with intellectual disability](#)

Children with intellectual disabilities (ID) may show declines in motor skills during the Covid-19 restrictions. This study compared the effects of physical inactivity due to COVID-19 on the motor skills of active and inactive children with ID.

[Using a hospital passport from the perspective of adults with intellectual disabilities, family carers and health professionals: A qualitative study](#)

This article explores the experiences of the use of the Regional Health and Social Care Hospital Passport (Regional Hospital Passport) in Northern Ireland from the perspectives of adults with intellectual disabilities, family carers and health professionals. From semi-structured interviews three themes emerged: usefulness; facilitators; and barriers to the use of the Regional Hospital Passport.

[Autistic and non-autistic young people's and caregivers' perspectives on COVID-19-related schooling changes and their impact on emotional well-being: An opportunity for change?](#)

Autistic children and young people experience poorer mental health and well-being compared to their non-autistic peers. Navigating the complex social, academic, procedural and sensory aspects of school may be particularly challenging for autistic young people and contribute to poorer mental well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented school changes and provided a unique opportunity to gather caregiver's and young people's perspectives on the impact of school and pandemic-related school changes on the well-being of both autistic and non-autistic young people.

[A critical overview of how English health and social care publications represent autistic adults' intimate lives](#)

Autistic people face more social barriers to, and experience greater anxiety around, intimate relationships than the general population in our majority neurotypical society, leading to increased loneliness and social isolation. National health and social care policies and publications should recognise these inequalities and guide service systems in reducing them. In this paper, we employ a document analysis design to analyse a cross-section of English national health and social care publications to investigate how autistic adults' intimate lives are represented and prioritised in these publications. Most publications do not adequately and proportionally recognise or prioritise autistic people's intimate lives. They focus on the risks associated with sex and relationships and overlook autism-specific intimacy needs. They prioritise participation in the workforce while renouncing government responsibility for supporting intimate relationships which can reduce loneliness and alienation. We offer recommendations to ensure that health and social care publication processes better recognise intimate lives.

Reports

[Adult Social Care Committee challenges government to urgent reforms in adult social care](#)

The Committee's report A "gloriously ordinary life": Spotlight on adult social care warns that the continued invisibility of the adult social care sector as a whole is increasingly damaging to both those who draw on care and who provide unpaid care at a time of increasing need, rising costs and a shrinking workforce.

Statistics

[NHS Digital publishes statistics on the health and care of people with learning disabilities: statistical press release](#)

Information on key health issues of people with conditions, including autism, is among the new data being released in the Health and Care of People with Learning Disabilities, 2021-221.

The report summarises statistics relating to 56% of those patients in England who are recorded by their GP as having a learning disability. The experimental data also includes comparative information about patients recorded by their GP as not having a learning disability, to show differences in health and care between the two groups.

Blogs

[Making plans if there are power cuts this winter](#)

Blog from Emma Smith, Policy Lead at Learning Disability England.

[Blog: How to employ people with learning disabilities in research](#)

Two years ago, Richard Keagan-Bull, who has a learning disability, joined Kingston University as a research assistant. He worked on the Growing Older Planning Ahead Project with researcher, Rebecca Anderson. Richard's job was to co-facilitate interviews and focus groups, and co-design group sessions. He also had input into the design, analysis and dissemination of the research. The team wrote a paper about the process of Richard getting his job, to share what worked well and what needs to be done differently.

News

[Autism incidence in England varies by ethnicity, class, location](#)

Children from minority ethnic groups and of low socioeconomic status in eastern and southeastern districts of England had the country's highest rates of new autism diagnoses between 2014 and 2017, according to a [study](#) of more than 7 million schoolchildren.

[Chronicle of a field retold: Autism science in profile](#)

Instead of reflecting on autism through studies or statistics, for *Spectrum*'s fifth annual book — available to [download as a PDF](#) on our site today — we sought a more personal lens: the lives of the people who research the condition. The scientist profiles that fill these pages reveal a heterogeneous bunch, with wide-ranging academic interests and hobbies. Published over the past 12 years on our site, the profiles, arranged alphabetically here, have been updated to include highly cited papers and 2022 news from the researchers themselves.

[Young Ambassadors call on Prime Minister to end mental health hospitals crisis](#)

Our autistic young ambassadors have signed an open letter to the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, calling for an urgent national inquiry into the scandal of autistic people being stuck in mental health hospitals in England. Fifteen young ambassadors aged between 16 and 21 have signed the letter, alongside our Chief Executive, Caroline Stevens. The letter states how autistic people are being failed by the mental health system and calls for a national inquiry into the abuse that has and continues to take place in these settings.

[Number of autistic people in mental health hospitals: November 2022 data](#)

The latest monthly Assuring Transformation NHS Digital data shows that in November 2022:

- In total 2005 autistic people and people with learning disabilities are in inpatient mental health hospitals in England
- 1,245 (62%) of these people are autistic
- 95% of under 18s in inpatient mental health hospitals in England are autistic (185)

[Ofsted Annual Report](#)

Ofsted published its [annual report](#) yesterday. The report is presented to the government every year by His Majesty's Chief Inspector. It covers key themes such as early years childcare, further education, social care and SEND. The report discusses the challenges and problems that UK education and social care is facing, as well as providing commentary on policy changes for the year ahead.

[New film highlights barriers women with learning disabilities face when reporting sexual violence](#)

A new film, *Us Too: Alisha's Story*, highlights the experiences of women with learning disabilities when reporting sexual violence. The film, which was released by Open Clasp Theatre Company and co-created with women with learning disabilities who have experienced domestic abuse, depicts the difficulties that Alisha faced when reporting an incident of sexual assault – difficulties which many women with learning disabilities face.

[Half a million pounds of funding to support people with learning disabilities to navigate the internet](#)

Google.org has granted the learning disability charity Mencap £500,000 of funding to deliver accessible online harms training to people with learning disabilities. The funding, Mencap say, will be used to create better information and resources to support people with learning disabilities online, as well as to deliver wrap-around care and support, including mentorship and in person classes.

[Hft provides training courses on implementing personalised technology](#)

Learning disability charity Hft is offering a number of training courses to raise awareness and better education around the implementation of personalised technology to give adults with learning disabilities greater control over their lives.

The courses range from bespoke workshops to accredited qualifications, all using practical examples and real-life case studies.

[Government's decision to scrap Traineeship Programme "devastating" for people with learning disabilities](#)

The government has announced it will scrap its Traineeship Programme that has been running for nearly a decade due to low take-up. The learning disability charity Mencap have described the decision as "devastating", saying it will now be even harder for people with learning disabilities to access paid work.

["Barbaric" that thousands remain unnecessarily detained in mental health hospitals, charities say](#)

The learning disability charity Mencap says it is "barbaric" that more than 2,000 people with learning disabilities and autism are still locked away in mental health hospitals. The latest NHS figures reveal that at least 2,005 people are currently being held in inpatient facilities. The average length of stay in these hospitals is 5.4 years, but 350 have been detained for a decade or more.