

Autism risk may be related to genes that influence sex-specific traits

Genetic variants that shape physical features that vary with sex, such as waist-to-hip ratio, may also affect autism risk, according to a new [study](#).

Many of the genes involved in these features are not linked to autism or even the brain. Instead, they help establish basic physical differences between the sexes, says lead investigator [Lauren Weiss](#), associate professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco.

“Whatever general biological sex differences cause a [variant] to have a different effect on things like height in males and females, those same mechanisms seem to be contributing to autism risk,” she says.

The results bolster the notion that mutations in some genes contribute to autism’s [skewed sex ratio](#): The condition is diagnosed in about five boys for every girl.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Some autism risk may arise from sex-specific traits](#)