

Extreme Male Brain Theory? Girls with autism have characteristically more masculine faces

A new study suggests that boys and girls with autism have facial features that are characteristically more male than female. [...] The findings, [published in Scientific Reports](#), could provide evidence for a controversial theory that sees autism as the result of an “extreme male brain.”

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The researchers found distinct facial similarities in boys and girls with autism compared to those in the control group. These included differences in the width of the alar base (or nostrils); height of the nose and upper lip; forehead width and height; right upper cheek height; and other subtle facial differences.

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The effort to identify a facial phenotype for autism could help improve clinical assessments, leading to diagnosis at a younger age and earlier interventions and treatment. Proponents of extreme male brain theory may see this new study as supporting their claim. Coined in 2002 by Simon Baron-Cohen, now a director of the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge, England, the theory says that people with autism [exhibit personality attributes and behaviors](#) typically associated with the male gender, such as lack of empathy and rigid thinking. These common traits of people with autism, the theory asserts, are the result of higher exposure levels of male hormone testosterone during fetal development.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Girls With Autism Look Masculine, Study Shows, Lending Support to Extreme Male Brain Theory