

Viewpoint: Why we need better tools to identify depression in autistic people

Depression is more common among autistic people than it is among the general population, based on both clinical experience and research evidence. Some researchers argue that it is actually the most common mental-health condition in autistic people.

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When screening for depression, clinicians typically use clinical interviews or questionnaires validated in the general population. The tools reflect criteria outlined in manuals such as the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders” ([DSM-5](#)) or the “International Classification of Diseases” (ICD-10).

However, growing evidence indicates that mental-health difficulties such as anxiety and depression may take a different form in autistic people than they do in other people.

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Autistic adults have reported that their low moods are often accompanied by increased or decreased responses to sounds and other sensory stimuli, or by a change in [repetitive behaviors](#). Traditional depression measures would not pick up on these signs. As a result, depression may be poorly recognized at the individual level and underestimated at the group level.

We propose that researchers work toward establishing a clear picture of the ways in which depression presents in autistic people. This might involve the use of statistical methods and direct consultations to explore how well the items in existing depression measures work in autistic people.

Read full, original post: [Why we need screens for depression in people with autism](#)