

Autism diagnosis, treatment often complicated by accompanying conditions

More than half of people on the [autism] spectrum have four or more other conditions. The types of co-occurring conditions and how they manifest varies from one autistic person to the next.

These conditions can exacerbate features of autism or affect the timing of an autism diagnosis, so understanding how they interact with autism is important.

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The conditions that overlap with autism generally fall into one of four groups: classic medical problems, such as epilepsy, gastrointestinal issues or sleep disorders; developmental diagnoses, such as intellectual disability or language delay; mental-health conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder or depression; and genetic conditions, including fragile X syndrome and tuberous sclerosis complex.

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The tools used to identify the conditions may not work as well in people with autism. Researchers are developing autism-specific scales, such as a depression-screening questionnaire, to help solve these diagnostic puzzles.

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A better understanding of these conditions could improve quality of life for autistic people. For instance, identifying the genes involved could lead to early detection — and treatment — of the conditions.

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Some of these conditions may share biological mechanisms with autism. For instance, a study published this year revealed that gene-expression patterns in the brains of people with autism are similar to those in people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Read full, original post: [Conditions that accompany autism, explained.](#)