

## Blood test for autism? Discovery of 'distinctive pattern' in white cells may make it possible

Researchers have identified a distinctive pattern of gene expression in the white blood cells of young autistic [boys](#).

The discovery has not yet been validated in children whose autism status is unknown, but if confirmed, it could pave the way for a blood test for the condition.

The genes in this molecular signature are involved in the maturation and growth of cells in the brain. And the degree of the differences in an autistic child's blood compared with controls seems to track with the severity of the child's autism.

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The researchers have yet to test the molecular signature in children whose autism status is unknown. Doing so is essential for determining whether it is a reliable marker of autism and could lead to a [blood test for the condition](#), they say.

Still, experts are excited about this first step. The molecular signature could perhaps even be used to identify subtypes of autism, says [neuroscientist] [Damon Page](#).

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The team plans to repeat their analysis with hundreds of samples from autistic children. They are also gathering blood from girls with the condition to look for sex differences in the signature.

**Read full, original post:** [Molecular signature may lead to blood test for autism](#)