

Questioning the reliability of common autism screening tool

A short, widely used screening survey for autism called the Autism Spectrum Quotient – 10 items (AQ-10) may not be reliable for measuring traits of the condition in the general population, according to a study of more than 6,500 [adults](#).

The test, a 10-item questionnaire that was adapted from the 50-item Autism Spectrum Quotient (AQ), initially was intended to flag adults who might require diagnostic [evaluation for autism](#). But in recent years, many researchers have used it to assess autism traits in large studies of the general population.

The new paper raises questions about this use. “It’s not quite as good as we think it is, and it might not be reliable,” says lead investigator [Punit Shah](#).

...

Based on the responses, the questions seem to cluster into four groups, the team found. That suggests that the questionnaire may measure four different traits, rather than [autism](#) as a single, whole construct, Shah says.

...

Shah himself encourages more research and says that it would be premature to discard the AQ-10, in part because there is not currently [a good replacement for it](#). “The thing that I’d recommend is at least testing the reliability and validity of the instrument wherever possible in each study where it’s used,” he says.

[Read the original post](#)