

If genetic therapy could cure or eradicate autism, should it be made available? The autistic community is not so sure

A large, UK-based study of genetics and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been paused, following criticism that it failed to properly consult the autism community about the goals of the research. Concerns about the study include fears that its data could potentially be misused by other researchers seeking to 'cure' or eradicate ASD.

The [Spectrum 10K](#) study is led by Simon Baron-Cohen, director of the Autism Research Centre (ARC) at the University of Cambridge, UK

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Kieran Rose, an advocate for autistic people and a member of the Boycott Spectrum 10K group, says he is worried that the research could lead to a prenatal screening test for ASD or related conditions. "A genetic study would be terrifying for lots of autistic people; there's a long-established and well-known history around eugenics and disability," adds [psychologist Sue] Fletcher-Watson.

The Spectrum 10K website states that it "does not aim to eradicate autism". Baron-Cohen says that his team is vehemently against eugenics, and that prenatal screening is out of the question. "Genetics of autism is complex; we may be talking about hundreds or thousands of genes," he says. "You could never diagnose autism prenatally."

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.\*\*](#)