

# Estimated prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders is nearly 1 in 8 among children in India

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Almost one in eight children aged 2-9 years living in India may have at least one neurodevelopmental disorder (NDD), according to prevalence estimates published this week in *PLOS Medicine*. The study, conducted by Narendra K Arora of the INCLEN Trust International, New Delhi, India, and colleagues, partially addresses the lack of robust evidence regarding burden and risk factors for NDD in India.

Given the widespread prevalence of known NDD risk factors, the NDD burden among children in India is thought to be high— but data to inform policy and programmatic action have been limited. In their study, Arora and colleagues assessed roughly four thousand 2 to 9-year-olds across five geographically diverse sites in India—Kangra, Dhenkanal, Palwal, North Goa, and Hyderabad—for common NDD, including hearing impairment (HI), speech and language disorders, [autism spectrum disorders](#), and intellectual disability (ID). According to the researchers, prevalence of any NDD in children varied according to site, from roughly 5% (Dhenkanal) to roughly 19% (Palwal), with HI and ID most prevalent. About one-fifth of NDD-affected children had two or more NDD. Due to the site-specific sampling and 15.6% refusal rate, these estimates cannot be assumed to represent India as a whole and may be conservative.

Key risk factors for childhood NDD included home delivery, perinatal asphyxia, [low birth weight](#), neurological infections, and stunting. The

authors state, "[t]he data suggest that the NDD burden can be substantially reduced in India by addressing risk factors which are amenable to [public health interventions](#)."

**More information:** Arora NK, Nair MKC, Gulati S, Deshmukh V, Mohapatra A, Mishra D, et al. (2018) Neurodevelopmental disorders in children aged 2-9 years: Population-based burden estimates across five regions in India. *PLoS Med* 15(7): e1002615.  
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