

# Does deafness alter brain circuits supporting social skills?

August 23 2023

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Hearing impairment may cause difficulties in social interactions, but new research indicates that social struggles experienced by deaf individuals are likely not due to brain alterations, but rather due to non-

supportive environments.

The findings, which are published in *Human Brain Mapping*, suggest that deafness does not affect the mechanisms and brain circuits supporting [social skills](#).

For the research, investigators analyzed published neuroimaging studies focusing on social perception in deaf versus hearing participants. Results indicated that both deaf and hearing participants recruited the same [brain regions](#) when performing different social tasks. Deaf individuals showed greater activation in regions involved in processing social information from visual inputs (such as signs and lip reading).

"Promoting learning of sign language in hearing individuals, as well as providing salient visual cues in social situations, would facilitate social inclusion of [deaf individuals](#)," the authors wrote.

**More information:** Social perception in deaf individuals: a meta-analysis of neuroimaging studies, *Human Brain Mapping* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/hbm.2644](#). [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10970193](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10970193)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Does deafness alter brain circuits supporting social skills? (2023, August 23) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-deafness-brain-circuits-social-skills.html>

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