

Sleep disorders found to differ for autism, ADHD versus typical development

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For most types of sleep disorders, there are significant differences for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and those with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) compared with typically

developing (TD) children, according to a study [published](#) online Dec. 29 in *Autism Research*.

Carmen Berenguer, Ph.D., from the Universitat de València in Spain, and colleagues examined the differences in sleep problems among a group of children with ASD without intellectual disabilities, a group with ADHD, and a TD group (47, 43, and 32 children, respectively; aged 7 to 12 years) matched on age and intelligence. Questionnaires measuring sleep disturbances and [communication skills](#) were completed by parents.

The researchers identified significant differences in most types of sleep disorders between the ASD and ADHD groups and the TD group. The group with ADHD showed significantly more sleep breathing disorders and hyperhidrosis compared with the ASD and TD groups, as well as more total sleep problems. Compared with the ASD group, the ADHD group had greater predictive power of [sleep problems](#) on communication difficulties. Sleep problems were found to partially mediate the association between symptoms and communication in both groups.

"Understanding the sleep dysfunctions that occur in both conditions and their repercussion in other areas such as communication is crucial for developing tailored interventions that reduce the adverse consequences of sleep disturbances," the authors write.

More information: Carmen Berenguer et al, Sleep problems in children with autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: A comparative study and effects on communication skills, *Autism Research* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/aur.3077](#)

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