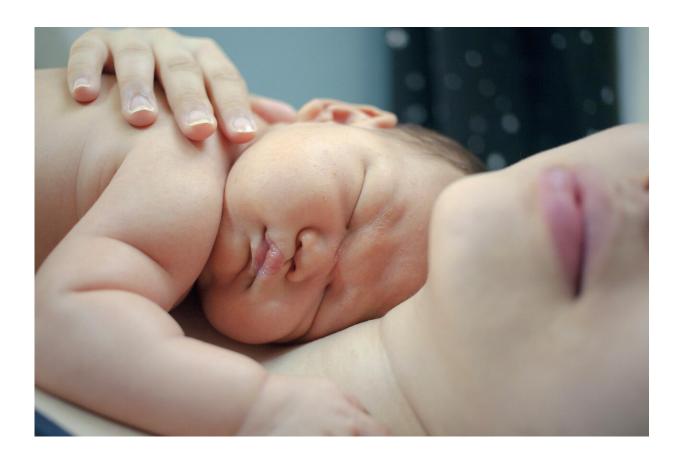


Study confirms the utility of screening to identify autism in toddlers born preterm

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New research <u>published</u> in *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* reveals that children born preterm are more likely to screen positive for autism than full-term children.



For the study, 9,725 toddlers were screened at 15-, 18-, or 24-month well child visits using a test called the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised.

Screening results that were positive for <u>autism</u> were most common among children born extremely preterm (51.35%) and least common among those born full-term (6.95%). Subsequent evaluations after positive screening revealed the following rates of autism diagnoses: 16.05% of extremely preterm, 2.00% of very preterm, 2.89% of moderately preterm, and 1.49% of full-term births.

Utilizing the screening test at ages unadjusted for early birth was effective for identifying autism, as only a small number of preterm children (1.90%) who screened positive with the test did not receive a diagnosis of autism or other <u>developmental delay</u> following evaluation.

"With this research, we are hoping to help dissipate doubts that clinicians might have about the utility of screening for autism in <u>toddlers</u> born preterm," said corresponding author Georgina Perez Liz, MD, of the AJ Drexel Autism Institute. "Low-cost, universal public health strategies such as screening can lead to less disparity in autism detection and help <u>children</u> on the spectrum start specific intervention and supports earlier in life."

More information: Autism screening and diagnostic outcomes among toddlers born preterm, *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* (2024). DOI: 10.1111/dmcn.16045

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