

# research snapshot

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## Feeling Different From Others May Be Linked to Depression in Youth With Asperger Syndrome

### What is this research about?

Depressive symptoms occur frequently in people with Asperger Syndrome (AS) but there is a lack of research that specifically focuses on depression in this population. Research with people without AS has shown that there is a link between depressive symptoms and negatively comparing oneself to others. Individuals with AS often experience social difficulties and may feel socially isolated due to an awareness of being different from others, when being different is seen in a negative light. The present study looked at the relationship between depressive symptoms and how youth with AS think about themselves in comparison to others.

### What did the researchers do?

The researchers asked 36 children and teens with AS in South Australia to complete questionnaires about their feelings and how they think about themselves in comparison to others.

### What you need to know:

Depressive symptoms are common in youth with Asperger Syndrome. Negatively comparing oneself to others may be linked to more depressive symptoms among youth with Asperger Syndrome.

### What did the researchers find?

The researchers found youth who negatively compared themselves to others reported more depressive symptoms. Specifically, youth who saw themselves as more dissimilar to others, and reported feeling like they do not belong, reported more depressive symptoms.

### How can you use this research?

This research offers insight into ways to treat depression in youth with AS. Interventions aimed at helping youth with AS better understand and accept their differences may be important to promote mental health and well-being.

## About the Researcher

Robyn Young is an Associate Professor in the School of Psychology at Flinders University. Darren Hedley is a Researcher in the School of Psychology at Flinders University and a Postdoctoral Fellow at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

## Citation

Young, R. & Hedley, D. (2006). Social comparison processes and depressive symptoms in children and adolescents with asperger syndrome. *Autism*, 10(2), 139-153.

## Keywords

Asperger Syndrome, Children, Adolescents, Teenagers, Depression, Social comparison, Mental health, Therapy, Treatment, Social skills, Group belonging

This research summary was written by Evguenia Ignatova for the Chair in Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment and Care Research. This research summary, along with other summaries, can be found on our [blog](#) and at [asdmentalhealth.ca/research-summaries](http://asdmentalhealth.ca/research-summaries)

## About the Chair

The Chair in Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment and Care Research is dedicated to studying ways to improve the mental health and well-being of people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and their families in Canada.

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For more information, visit the Chair in Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment and Care Research website at [asdmentalhealth.ca](http://asdmentalhealth.ca)

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