

Australian Longitudinal Study of Autism in Adulthood (ALSAA)

Australian autistic adults aged 25+ years old, 2015 – 2021



Adulthood



Background

The majority of autism research has focused on children. When the Australian Longitudinal Study of Autism in Adulthood (ALSAA) started in 2015, one autistic researcher commented: “We know virtually nothing about what happens to us, autistic people, physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially as we pass through middle and older age” (Michael, 2016, p. 515).

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How we did the research

- Participants completed large comprehensive surveys.
- Participants could fill in the survey online or they could fill in a paper survey booklet.
- Some participants gave an informant response, where a trusted person completed the survey on their behalf.
- We then did many different analyses that looked at aspects of autistic adults’ wellbeing and what predicted wellbeing.



Aim

To describe the health and well-being of Australian autistic adults.



Who took part

The ALSAA gathered from across Australia from autistic and non-autistic adults aged 25+ years old. It gathered data at two time points.

Time point 1

293 autistic adults

146 non-autistic adults

102 carers or family members

Time point 2, an additional

251 autistic adults

45 non-autistic adults

40 carers or family members

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What we found

The ALSAA study has increased knowledge of autism in adulthood in many different areas, including:



Health and health services



Employment



Medication use



Sleep



Depression and suicide



Anxiety



Coping and resilience



Autism diagnosis



Quality of life



Loneliness



Leisure participation



Autism in later life



Diagnosis disclosure



Wellbeing of carers

More detail is found in individual publications. More work is still being published, exploring areas such as:



Activities of daily living



Intellectual disability



Physical activity

Overall, autistic adults experience significant disadvantages and barriers in many areas including access to appropriate support, and more needs to be done in equipping health practitioners and improving autism friendliness in Australian society.

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Who did the research



UNSW
SYDNEY



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



Olga Tennison
Autism Research Centre



Curtin University



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

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Find out more

Download the final report and executive summary on the Autism CRC website:

autismcrc.com.au/reports/ALSAA



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