



An investigation of the age and severity of autism spectrum disorder diagnosis in children and adolescents with and without a co-occurring diagnosis

Title	An investigation of the age and severity of autism spectrum disorder diagnosis in children and adolescents with and without a co-occurring diagnosis
Author(s)	Hogan, Amy;Leader, Geraldine;Mannion, Arlene
Publication Date	2017-04
Publisher	The Psychological Society of Ireland

This is a post-print of an article published in *The Irish Psychologist*.

An investigation of the age and severity of autism spectrum disorder diagnosis in children and adolescence with and without a co-occurring diagnosis

Amy Hogan, Geraldine Leader & Arlene Mannion

National University of Ireland, Galway

Aims: The aim of this study is to investigate the age of diagnosis of children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in comparison to children with a diagnosis of ASD and comorbid disorders. It will also look at severity of diagnosis in children with a diagnosis of ASD compared to children with a diagnosis of ASD and comorbid disorders. Finally, it will investigate whether later diagnosis of ASD and autism severity predict gastrointestinal symptoms and behaviour problems.

Methods: Participants will consist of 120 parents of children and adolescence with a diagnosis of autism, under the age of 18. Parents will be given an online battery of questionnaires including a demographic questionnaire, the Autism Spectrum Disorder-Comorbidity for Children (ASD-CC), Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ), Behaviour Problems Inventory (Short Form) (BPI-S), and Gastrointestinal Symptoms Inventory. This is to be completed anonymously, in their own time.

Results: This study aims to show that the age and severity of diagnosis is higher in children with ASD and a comorbid disorder, than children and adolescents with ASD alone. It also aims to show that later diagnosis of ASD and autism severity will predict gastrointestinal symptoms and behaviour problems.

Discussion: The findings aim to support the previous literature which indicates that later diagnosis is evident in children with ASD and comorbid diagnosis. Implications of further research and discussed.