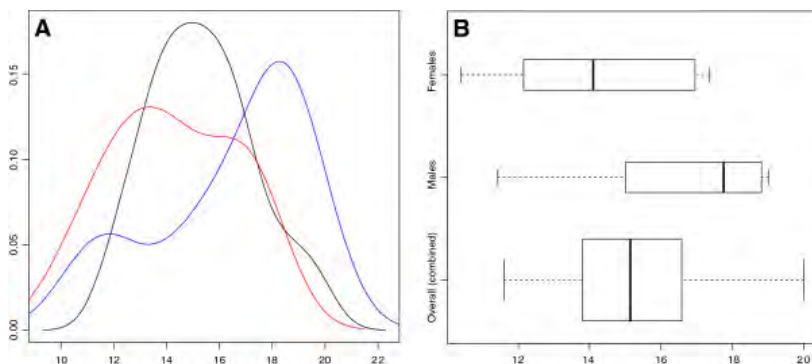


Beyond the Label of Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) describes a set of behaviors associated with specific differences in how one's brain perceives and processes environmental input. It is a "spectrum condition" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees.



This graphic shows that autism-related characteristics are present at varying levels throughout the general population.

AQ distributions for nonclinical populations. (A) Kernel density estimates for unweighted Autism-Spectrum Quotient (AQ) distributions for nonclinical populations. AQ score on the x-axis and density on the y-axis. Male scores in blue, female scores in red, and combined scores in black. (B) Box plot of mean AQ scores for all studies. Box width scaled to reflect the number of studies included.

This information is from initial analysis of data from 2,246 students of a single institution.

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Graphic and caption taken from: Ruzich, E., Allison, C., Smith, P., Watson, P., Auyeung, B., Ring, H., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2015). Measuring autistic traits in the general population: a systematic review of the Autism-Spectrum Quotient (AQ) in a nonclinical population sample of 6,900 typical adult males and females. *Molecular Autism*, 6, 2.

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All of the 618 students participating in our study identified with at least one autism-related characteristic.

Although ASD is clinically defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM5), the characteristics of autism can be found in varying degrees throughout the human population.

Thinking of autism as a spectrum bolsters the idea of universal supports; assistance available for anyone which cater to certain autism characteristics. Additionally, thinking of autism this way helps fight stigma.

Links to related resources:

- [Article] Measuring autistic traits in the general population: a systematic review of the Autism-Spectrum Quotient (AQ) in a nonclinical population sample of 6,900 typical adult males and females
- [List] College support programs
- [DSM5] ASD diagnostic criteria