

Autism traits increase thoughts of suicide in people with psychosis

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People with autism traits who have psychosis are at a greater risk of depression and thoughts of suicide, new research has found.

autism and [psychosis](#), and the need to ask about [autism traits](#) in clinical assessments."

The research, led by Professor Stephen Wood at Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health, showed that, among people with [psychosis](#), [depressive symptoms](#) and thoughts of self-harm were not because of the psychosis, but instead were linked to the level of autism traits a person had.

Provided by Orygen

"The more autism traits people with psychosis had, the lonelier and more hopeless they felt and were more likely to think about [suicide](#)," Professor Wood said.

"When a person presents with a [psychotic illness](#), such as schizophrenia, they are at an increased risk of self-harm or suicide. People with autism are also at a heightened risk."

Professor Wood's team explored how the two might be related by reviewing people with a clinical diagnosis of psychosis and those without. "What we found was that with both groups the more autism traits a person had, the more likely they were to have [depressive symptoms](#) and suicide ideation."

The research has been published in the journal *Schizophrenia Research*.

Professor Wood said to prevent people attempting suicide it was important to identify those most at risk. "Our study shows that a person's level of autism traits is an extremely important marker in helping identify those people with psychosis at risk of [suicide](#)," he said.

"What we need to do now is improve care for people with high levels of [autism traits](#) who develop a [psychotic illness](#). This means better training for clinical staff to support people with both

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