

For black children with autism, diagnosis occurs at about age 5

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(HealthDay)—Diagnosis of African American children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) occurs at an average of 64.9 months, many months after parents' first concerns about their child's development, according to a study published online Aug. 24 in *Pediatrics*.

John N. Constantino, M.D., from the School of Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis, and colleagues analyzed data on African American [children](#) with ASD and examined delays in diagnosis and obstacles to service access. Parents of 584 African American children with autism completed event history calendar interviews for their children. These data were assessed relative to developmental outcomes for children with autism and their siblings.

The researchers found that ASD was diagnosed at an average age of 64.9 months, which was 42.3 months after parents' first concerns about their children's development on average. There was a complex relationship observed between the timing

of diagnosis and ASD severity. Intellectual disability comorbidity was not predicted in a direct way by familial factors that are linked to cognitive variation within the general population.

"We highlight a pressing need to determine whether broad implementation of timely diagnosis, when coupled with high-quality early intervention, would reduce the proportion of African American children with autism and comorbid intellectual disability," the authors write. "An immediate public health and research priority is to explore the extent to which resolution of health disparities that compromise timely access to effective intervention can reduce [deleterious effects](#) on cognition that disproportionately accompany [autism](#) among African American youth."

Two authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

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