



Research Summary: **Young Children With ASD Who Have Medicaid Insurance Are More Likely to be Prescribed Atypical Antipsychotics and Alpha Agonists Than Those with Private Insurance.**

Many children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are prescribed medication to help them control their behaviors or emotions. In this study we used data from the electronic health record at 3 DBPNet sites to determine the factors that led developmental and behavioral pediatricians (DBPs) to prescribe these types of medications for children with ASD.

We found that DBPs were more likely to prescribe medications for behavior or emotions in children with ASD when the child was older and when the child had behavioral diagnoses in addition to ASD. We found that the type of insurance the child had (Medicaid vs. Private Insurance) was related to a difference in prescribing medication for behavior and emotions in young children, but not older children. Specifically, 3 to 5 year old children with Medicaid were more likely to be prescribed medication for behavior and emotions than were 3-5 year old children with private insurance. The types of medications that were more likely to be prescribed to young children with ASD who had Medicaid insurance were atypical antipsychotics and alpha agonists. This study does **not** mean that the difference in insurance is the cause of the difference in prescribing medication to young children. This study is not able to determine why the difference in prescribing occurs, but multiple factors could contribute including: differences in when the groups seek health care, differences in behavioral expectations between groups, differences in access or quality of behavioral and educational treatments for ASD, physician bias in prescribing practices, and lower cost access to pharmacologic treatments in Medicaid than private insurance among others.

Jackel C, Shults J, Wiley S, Meinzen-Derr J, Augustyn M, Blum NJ. Factors Associated with Developmental Behavioral Pediatricians Prescribing Psychotropic Medication to Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A DBPNet Study. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* (In Press).

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