



---

## Uploaded to the VFC Website

▶▶▶▶ 2021 ◀◀◀◀

---

This Document has been provided to you courtesy of Veterans-For-Change!

Feel free to pass to any veteran who might be able to use this information!

For thousands more files like this and hundreds of links to useful information, and hundreds of "Frequently Asked Questions, please go to:

[Veterans-For-Change](#)

---

*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

---

**Note:**

VFC is not liable for source information in this document, it is merely provided as a courtesy to our members & subscribers.



# Children with autism more likely to be prescribed antipsychotic medication, study finds

Apr 4 2018

A new study by Swansea University has suggested that children with intellectual difficulty or autism are more likely to be given antipsychotic medication from a younger age than those without intellectual disability and have higher rates of hospitalization for depression and for injury and also are at risk of other medical side effects.

Antipsychotic medication can be prescribed for young people with serious mental conditions such as schizophrenia. Some antipsychotic medications have also been used to reduce aggression in children with disruptive behavior. They are also sometimes used for short-term management of young people with explosive anger.

The study, led by Professor Sinead Brophy of the University's Medical School published in the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, examined how antipsychotics are used in the NHS, by linking hospital, general practitioner and educational records for 3028 young people who had been prescribed an antipsychotic.

## Study Findings

It was found that children with intellectual difficulty or autism were more likely to be given an antipsychotic. The study found:

- 2.8% had been prescribed antipsychotics
- 75% of these children had autism
- This compares with 0.15% of those without intellectual disability.

Those with intellectual disability or autism were prescribed them younger and for a longer period than those without intellectual disability or autism. The research found that 50% of those with intellectual disability or autism had more than 12 prescriptions compared to 25% of those without intellectual disability or autism.

For young people who did not have intellectual disability or autism, there were lower rates of depression and injury after the antipsychotic, but for those with autism or intellectual disability, there were higher rates of being hospitalized for depression and for injury. This is possibly because it has a sedative effect and makes children more injury prone and if the child did not have a manic or agitated type mental health condition beforehand, it can lead to depression.

## **Side Effects**

Antipsychotics are known to be associated with increasing seizures in those with epilepsy. In some people certain antipsychotics can cause weight gain and potential diabetes and reducing swallowing and so leaving people open to respiratory infections. The study found evidence of higher rates of epilepsy, diabetes and respiratory infection requiring hospital admission in all young people, with and without autism or intellectual disability, who are on antipsychotics, compared to rates before being prescribed antipsychotics and compared to those not on antipsychotics.

Professor Brophy said: "Our research suggests that young people with intellectual difficulty or autism are more like to be prescribed antipsychotic medication than those with a psychotic diagnosis, and are prescribed this medication at a younger age and for a longer period of time.

"Treating behavioral problems in this way can lead to increased costs to the NHS in terms of higher epilepsy, respiratory infection, diabetes, depression and injury all requiring more visits to the GP and hospital. In addition, treating behavioral problems in this way can have long-term health implications for the individual and for those who care for them."

---

### **Source:**

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/press-office/latest-news/newstudyexaminesprescribingantipsychoticmedicationforchildrenwithautism.php>

---