



*This newsletter will bring you news of our recent progress on the MHAutism project.*

**What is MHAutism?** Mental Health in Autism (MHAutism) is a research project exploring the unique challenges adults with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) face in relation to mental health problems, self-injury, and thoughts about ending life. We are a team of researchers, led by [Dr Sarah Cassidy](#), that want to understand why adults with ASC experience these difficulties so we can lobby for better support to improve the quality of life for those affected.



## MHAutism Research News

### Progress so far:

We completed a systematic search of the scientific evidence about

the tools used to assess depression and suicide risk in adults with ASC. We found that **no studies** have ever used a valid tool to assess suicide risk in those with ASC. We did find a small number of studies that had used depression measures developed for the general population with people with ASC.

### Next steps:

We will be asking adults with an ASC diagnosis to feedback on the

depression and suicide risk measures selected from our review. We will investigate how people with ASC interpret the questions, get their feedback on the appropriateness of questions, and find out whether any important questions are missing. This will ensure that any changes to the measures are appropriate for adults with ASC.

### Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete our first online survey about mental health, self-injury and thoughts of ending life. We are currently analysing the responses which will help us understand how we can better support those with ASC who experience these difficulties.

## Future Research:

We are currently carrying out further research projects to help us understand mental health in those with ASC. One of our PhD students is looking for people with and without ASC to help with their research.

Kathy Cook is currently working to understand why adults with ASC may be at more risk of mental health problems and suicide than those without a diagnosis of ASC. This research will help us design ways to better recognise when someone with ASC is at risk of suicide, and develop better support to reduce suicide risk in these people.



**We need your help!** Kathy is currently looking for adults (aged 18-60), both with and without a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) to complete an anonymous online survey. This should take no more than an hour of your time. This work is important because there is a lack of research helping us understand the way adults with ASC experience suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

If you would like to complete the survey, please follow the link below and help us spread the word about this important research by sending it to everyone you know!

[https://coventrypsychology.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_3yFPvxhbRr93VIx](https://coventrypsychology.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3yFPvxhbRr93VIx)

**Thank you for your continuing support with our important work.**

## Contact Us!!

If you would like to know more about the MHAutism project please get in touch:



[www.mhautism.coventry.ac.uk](http://www.mhautism.coventry.ac.uk)



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