

There are a lot of research articles about autism. But how do you know which ones are good and reliable? This guide will help you be an informed reader of research. If you have any questions about a research article or other source, please contact the **ASERT Resource Center** (info@paautism.org or 1-877-231-4244).

Claiming a Single Cause for Autism

Autism researchers agree that there is probably not a single cause for autism. There are probably many reasons why the number of autistic people has grown. If a researcher is claiming that one thing, like vaccines, causes autism, the research is not true.

Claiming a Cure for Autism

There are no cures for autism. If a researcher or author claims they have a cure for autism, it is not true. There are therapies and support that can help with autism symptoms, such as applied behavior analysis (ABA).

Sensational Headlines

If the results seem too good to be true, you should be cautious when reading the article.

Studies are not Peer-Reviewed

It is important that studies that are published in journals be reviewed by researchers other than the authors. This helps to make sure that what is published is of good quality and that the results are valid or true.

The Research is Only Available in Social Media/Blog Post

If you cannot find other sources for a blog post or post on Twitter, Facebook, or Social Media, the research is probably not good. It could be someone's personal opinion and hasn't been reviewed by other researchers.

USE CAUTION



The following features are not always “red flags” but you should use caution when seeing them in research.

Promoting Non-Evidence Based Practices

If the authors are promoting practices that are not based on scientific evidence, such as alternative practices and medicine, you should be careful when reading the article. The practices might not be effective or could even be unsafe.

The Company is For Profit

If a company is making money selling books, pills, or other treatments, you should be cautious when reading their research. There are many other organizations that are not making a profit that publish research that you can read. You can tell if a website is for-profit by the “.com” ending. Most websites that end in “.org” are non-profit organizations. Websites that end in “.gov” or “.edu” are not used by for-profit companies.

Findings Haven't Been Replicated

If a researcher is the only person to publish on the findings, you should be cautious when reading their work. Ideally, findings should be the same across many studies. Or the researchers should be clear that their findings are new and should state that the research is still developing.

Recommended Sources

Here is a list of sources that ASERT recommends for looking for information about autism:



ASERT Collaborative
paautism.org
Association for Science in Autism Treatment
asatonline.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov
Organization for Autism Research
researchautism.org