

Call for proposals to create a dossier of evidence to better understand autism and epilepsy

Autism and epilepsy: laying out the evidence

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Overall goal: Create a dossier of evidence focusing on autism and epilepsy, outlining the scientific evidence and scale of the issue in human, social and economic terms. Highlight the gaps and barriers to progress to date, and strategic or collaborative action which can be taken to address this issue.

Background

People who are autistic and have epilepsy face some of the starkest inequalities in the world. We know that worldwide approximately 8.4 million people have both conditions. On average, they have poor quality of life, poor health and die early. We've known this for years, but a lack of strategic action has blocked progress.

Despite sharing some common mechanisms, autism and epilepsy remain virtually unstudied in combination. In fact, autism remains an exclusion factor in some epilepsy trials in the UK and globally. Research has shown that autistic people often develop epilepsy in adolescence whereas this is comparatively rare in the general population. Autistic people with epilepsy appear to develop resistance to traditional anti-epileptic medications more commonly and it is not known if there are autism-specific side effect profiles.

We believe that we must address this head-on and aim to drastically reduce the unacceptable inequalities that autistic people with epilepsy face in a generation.

Call for Proposals

We wish to fund the creation of an **evidence dossier** focusing on:

- A literature review of globally published peer-reviewed papers that focus on both autism and epilepsy, from basic/fundamental science to applied, where appropriate.
- Synthesis of existing economic analysis of the cost of epilepsy in autistic people/extrapolation from existing sources if the evidence base is limited.
- Synthesis of all evidence to create a dossier that is accessible to a wide range of researchers, policymakers, funders and professionals.

Autistica, Epilepsy Research UK and Young Epilepsy have created this collaborative grant to invite applications for a value of **£30,000.00** over **six months** to cover all aspects of the review.

We now request brief proposals for the grant.

Application process

Proposal

The method of submission of the proposal is via email to our Research & Grants Officer, Dr Cat Hughes: cat.hughes@autistica.org.uk

Proposals are due no later than 1st May 2020. All deadlines are at 11:59 PM local UK time. Autistica reserves the right to return without review any proposals found not to be in compliance with the policies, procedures, and research priorities outlined in the call for proposals.

Information and Formatting

The proposal should be detailed enough to be screened for scientific merit and relevant applicant experience. It must contain two parts: (i) The completed proposal form (ii) A letter from the institution confirming the applicant's eligibility. Please refer to the Eligibility section below.

Factors and further considerations which increase/decrease likelihood of success

- Applications must align with the principles set out in our [Research Strategy](#).
- Feasibility: You must include a clear and realistic plan to create the Evidence Dossier.
- Involvement of autistic adults, children and/or families in the design and production of research is viewed positively by Autistica.
- Please consider our research network, [Discover](#), as a resource which can facilitate involvement, communications, dissemination and policy outputs.

Eligibility

Applications will only be accepted from investigators holding appointments at academic, research or clinical institutions within the United Kingdom. Investigators must be in receipt of salary funding for the duration of the grant requested. Investigators holding a permanent full- or part-time academic or research post (or equivalent) at accredited academic, medical or research institutions within the UK are eligible to apply. Eligibility must be demonstrated with a letter from your institution at the time of submitting the proposal.

a. Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria above (e.g., postdoctoral fellows) are eligible to apply only if clear documentation is provided by the host institution stating that a contract is in place throughout the duration of the proposed research.

b. Proposals may be submitted in partnership with companies. In circumstances where the company receives funds from the grant a clear justification must be given, as well as a statement on what the company is contributing to the project directly.

c. Applicants are restricted to one proposal per review cycle as Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI.

d. The bulk of the proposed research must be conducted within the UK, although it is permissible for a proportion of the proposed research be conducted as part of an international collaboration.

Award

Autistica, in collaboration with Epilepsy Research UK and Young Epilepsy will make one award and already have £30,000 held in reserve for this call.

Autistica only pays direct costs (directly charged to a project as money spent and supported by an audit record). Autistica does not pay indirect costs (costs for resources used by a project that are shared by other activities (e.g. proportion of lead investigator or shared technician's time) or directly allocated costs (non-specific costs charged across all projects for underpinning resources (e.g. estates, shared IT and administration)).

Proposals will be reviewed by Autistica staff in terms of their fidelity to the scope of the call. The proposal will then be reviewed in terms of scientific quality by Autistica's Scientific Review Panel. Applicants will receive one of two responses from Autistica's research team with relevant scientific feedback from our Scientific Review Panel.

About the funders

Autistica is the UK's national autism research charity. Their vision is a world where all autistic people and their families live a long, healthy, happy life. They aim to achieve this mission by focusing on the research priorities of autistic people and their family members.

Epilepsy Research UK is the only charity exclusively dedicated to driving and enabling life changing, life saving research into epilepsy

Young Epilepsy is the leading national charity improving the lives of children and young people with epilepsy and related neurological conditions.

If you have any questions at all, please contact Dr Cat Hughes (cat.hughes@autistica.org.uk).

Autistica's policies on the [use of animals in research](#), and [Conflict of Interest](#)

[Autistica's Scientific Review Panel](#)

NIHR Study Support Service

Autistica is a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) non-commercial Partner. This means the studies that we fund may be eligible to access the NIHR Study Support Service which is provided by the NIHR Clinical Research Network.

The NIHR Clinical Research Network supports researchers and the life sciences industry to plan, setup and deliver high quality research to agreed timescales and study recruitment targets, for the benefit of patients and the NHS. This includes relevant research in public health and social care in England.

In partnership with your local R&D office, we encourage you to involve your [local Clinical Research Network team](#) in discussions as early as possible when planning your study. This will allow you to fully benefit from the support available through the NIHR Study Support Service. To find out more about how you can apply for this additional support to help deliver your study, please visit www.nihr.ac.uk/study-support-service.