



Children Are Our Future
PEDIATRIC ACADEMIC SOCIETIES

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Sleep disturbances associated with behavior problems in children with autism

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA – Reports have suggested that sleep problems in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are associated with challenging daytime behaviors.

A new study on a large group of youths with ASD confirms these reports and will support the development of treatments for sleep disturbances as a way to improve behavior, according to researchers from Autism Speaks' Autism Treatment Network (ATN).

Results of the study, and three others conducted by the ATN, will be presented Sunday, May 2 at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

An estimated one in 110 U.S. children has autism, a group of complex developmental brain disorders that affect behavior, social skills and communication.

The ATN, which includes 14 treatment and research centers in the United States and Canada, enrolls patients ages 2-18 years with a diagnosis of autism, Asperger's syndrome or pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS).

Parents of children participating in the ATN completed the Children's Sleep Habits Questionnaire and the Child Behavior Checklist. An analysis of 1,056 children found an association between sleep problems and problematic daytime behaviors, especially emotional problems and anxiety. Children who got less sleep had more emotional problems, and children who had parasomnias, including nightmares, night terrors and sleepwalking, had more behavior problems overall.

"This study contributes to our understanding of sleep issues and helps us to plan future work addressing more specific symptoms and treatments," said Daniel Coury, MD, medical director of the ATN and professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at The Ohio State University. "A better understanding of the relationship between sleep problems and daytime behavior could lead to more effective treatments for both."

Autism Speaks' [Autism Treatment Network \(ATN\)](#) is the first network of hospitals and physicians dedicated to developing a model of comprehensive medical care for children and adolescents with autism. The ATN offers families care from doctors highly experienced in helping individuals with autism and providing treatment for associated conditions such as gastrointestinal and sleep disorders, while disseminating best practices to the greater medical community.

For more information prior to the PAS meeting, contact Jane Rubinstein at 212-843-8287 or jrubinstein@rubenstein.com. To reach Dr. Coury during the PAS meeting, call the PAS Press Room at 778-331-7694. To see the abstract, go to http://www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view.php?nu=PAS10L1_3036&terms

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The Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) are four individual pediatric organizations who co-sponsor the PAS Annual Meeting – the American Pediatric Society, the Society for Pediatric Research, the Academic Pediatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Members of these organizations are pediatricians and other health care providers who are practicing in the research, academic and clinical arenas. The four sponsoring organizations are leaders in the advancement of pediatric research and child advocacy within pediatrics, and all share a common mission of fostering the health and well being of children worldwide. For more information, visit www.pas-meeting.org. Follow news of the PAS meeting on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/PedAcadSoc>.