

NEWS

# Electronic medical records may reveal subgroups of autism

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Some children diagnosed with autism may fall into distinct subgroups based on their symptoms and other diagnoses, researchers report in the January issue of *Pediatrics*<sup>1</sup>.

The three subgroups identified in the study show some overlap in symptoms, but each is characterized by a distinct set of features: seizures, general health problems such as gastrointestinal distress, and psychiatric problems.

“We have identified the ones that are the purest,” says lead researcher **Isaac Kohane**, professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.

The analysis relied on the largest database yet, and looked at symptoms over time. Even so, it was only able to categorize about 10 percent of the nearly 5,000 cases evaluated, highlighting the complex and diverse nature of autism symptoms.