

OPINION

# Can open-source tests balance autism prevalence maps?

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Today's news article considers the global inequities in access to autism diagnosis.

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As epidemiologist Maureen Durkin said in her keynote address at the **International Meeting for Autism Research** in May, obtaining an autism diagnosis is like having access to a new technology — it's not available to everybody. Worldwide, autism **prevalence** rates are tightly correlated with family income and parental education, with the highest prevalence reported in the richest countries.

The royalties associated with the commonly used diagnostic tests hinder both individuals' access as well as large-scale epidemiological studies.

The International Society of Autism Research's new president, **Francesca Happé**, echoed this sentiment during a **conversation at the meeting in May**. She says she plans to make global access a priority of the organization during her tenure.

In particular, Happé wonders if we can steal a page from the engineers who create solutions for the developing world: Could there be an autism test equivalent of an inexpensive, solar-powered mobile phone?

What do you think?

- **Do the costs associated with existing screening and diagnosis tools hinder your work?**

- **Despite the emergence of freely available diagnostic tools for autism, many argue that robust genetics and imaging studies, for example, require the detail captured by gold-standard measures, which are still proprietary. How can this be reconciled so that more of these studies can be done outside North America and Europe?**

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