- Infants

Baby sleep autism link

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Babies who sleep less or have poorer sleep quality are more likely to develop autistic traits and subsequently be diagnosed with autism.

In a cohort of just more than 1000 mother-infant pairs, researchers – including Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health scientists – surveyed parents about their baby's sleep patterns at six and 12 months. They then looked at the child's parentreported autism characteristics at two and four years old. Before the children had turned 12, 64 had been diagnosed with autism. The researchers say poor sleep quality as a baby was linked to more autism characteristics and a later autism diagnosis. Scientists found that every extra hour of sleep a baby got at six months was linked to fewer autism characteristics at age two.