



In a new study, researchers at the University of Pittsburgh found children with autism were more likely to have been exposed to certain air toxics during their mother's pregnancy and during their first two years of life.

The paper's preliminary results have been accepted for review by the the American Association for Aerosol Research; it's one of the first times researchers have found a correlation between air pollution and autism rates.

Scientists located the link after interviewing the families of more than 200 children diagnosed with autism. The results, including survey questions about air quality and exposure, were then compared to the responses from two separate control groups -- each including families without a child on the autism spectrum.

"Autism spectrum disorders are a major public health problem, and their prevalence has increased dramatically," the study's lead researcher Dr. Evelyn Talbott said in a press release. "Despite its serious social impact, the causes of autism are poorly understood. Very few studies of autism have included environmental exposures while taking into account other personal and behavioral risk factors. Our analysis is an addition to the small but growing body of research that considers air toxics as one of the risk factors for ASD."

[More...](#)