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Autism: prenatal stress, genetics and fatty acids

Autism has a major genetic component. However, recent data suggests a significant role for a number of environmental factors. In this talk, we will review several such factors, including prenatal stress, prenatal diet, and immune factors, and the evidence for how these might interact in the etiology of autism.

David W. Beversdorf, MD, is the William and Nancy Thompson Endowed Chair in Radiology at MU. He is also an associate professor of neurology and psychological sciences and a researcher at the MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. Dr. Beversdorf’s research interests include autism, drug abuse, dementia, cognitive effects of stress, the biological effects of prenatal stress and diet, the cognitive neuroscience of problem-solving ability and gene and stress interactions in the development of autism. He has received research funding from numerous sources, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Alliance for Autism Research and the Autism Treatment Network.

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