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## In Search of Prediction Factors for Autism Spectrum Disorders: An Impossible Task?

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### Author(s)

René Pry, Arne F. Petersen, Amaria Baghdadli

### ABSTRACT

Clinical work and prediction of development are closely linked in the practice of early detection, diagnosis and choice of modes of intervention in young children with autism. Variables are often defined in terms of risk factors or of development, and may refer to general or specific phenomena. The purpose of this paper was, using a generalized mixed model, to test ways of measuring development and its prediction regarding joint attention (that is to say, response to and initiation of joint attention) in children with autism. Over a period of one year, seventy-seven children were followed from the age of four and a half years upwards. The results show that it is possible to identify general risk factors, but much more difficult to pinpoint specific factors. In our current state of knowledge, prediction can only be of a global nature and therefore requires the use of general markers.

### KEYWORDS

Autism; Joint Attention; Prediction; GLMM; Risk Factor; General Marker

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