

Developmental stuttering with common and complex phenotypes

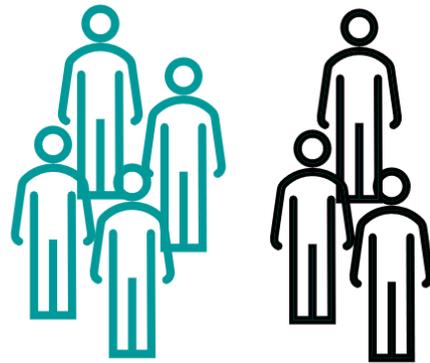
Key terms

Stuttering, child, adult, speech assessment

What this research is about

Developmental stuttering is a condition that affects the flow and rhythm of speech. We know that stuttering often runs in families and usually starts in early childhood. Less is known about the broader health and development of people who stutter.

We wanted to know if we could find groups of people who stutter with patterns of similar features (known as “phenotypes”). Better understanding stuttering phenotypes could help to ensure people who stutter get the support they need.



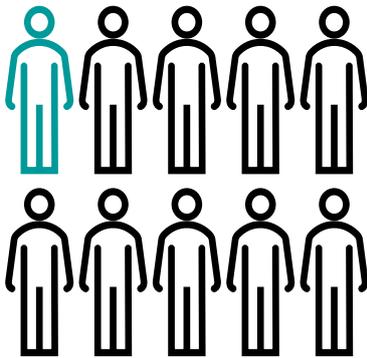
What the researchers did



- 327 people with developmental stuttering took part
- People were aged 5 to 90 years old
- We used online surveys to ask about history of stuttering, impact of stuttering, family history of stuttering, other health conditions, and development in early life
- We assessed speech and thinking abilities in an online video call

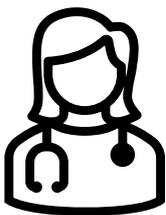
What the researchers found

- Four in ten people reported sleep problems, hearing difficulties, vision problems, or immune disorders such as allergies.
- One in three had a mental health condition, most commonly anxiety or depression.
- Stuttering was most severe in young adults, and moderately impacted their quality of life and social participation.



- There were two main groups with similar features: 90% of people had a “common phenotype” and 10% had of people a “complex phenotype”
- The complex group had more severe stuttering that had a greater negative impact on their daily lives, higher anxiety, lower nonverbal intelligence scores, and other neurodevelopmental conditions, including developmental delays.

What this means for people who stutter and their families



- People who stutter often need multidisciplinary support beyond speech therapy alone.
- Identifying different stuttering phenotypes could help healthcare providers to recognise when extra support is needed.

Learn more here: Horton SE, Shepherd DA, Siemers S, St John M, Catherall J, Scheffer IE, et al. Developmental stuttering with common and complex phenotypes. *Dev Med Child Neurol.* 2026; 00: 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dmcn.70208>