Low Apgar Score and Higher Risk of Autism Risk: Diffusion Weighted MRI

Low Apgar scores are linked to higher risk of Autism Spectrum Disorder, especially Autism Disorder, suggesting possible hypoxic brain injury at birth


Dr. Greg Vigna

SANTA BARBARA, CA, UNITED STATES, April 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- “Low Apgar score has been associated with higher risk for several neurological and psychiatric disorders, including cerebral palsy and intellectual disability... This study suggests that low Apgar score is associated with higher risk of Autism Spectrum Disorder, and in particular Autism Disorder,” states Dr. Abraham Reichenberg, Professor of Psychiatry, Icahn School of Medicine.

What does Dr. Reichenberg say about low Apgar scores and Autism?

“We included prospective data from 5.5 million individuals and over 33,000 cases of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Western Australia who were born between 1984 and 2007.

In fully adjusted models, low Apgar scores (1–3) (RR, 1.42); and intermediate Apgar scores (4–6) (RR, 1.50) were associated with a higher relative risk of ASD than optimal Apgar score (7–10). The point estimates for low (RR, 1.88; 95% CI, 1.41–2.51) and intermediate Apgar score (RR, 1.54; 95% CI, 1.32–1.81) were larger for AD than for ASD. This study suggests that low Apgar score is associated with higher risk of ASD, and in particular Austism Disorder.”

Read Dr. Reichenberg's study: https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10654-018-0445-1.pdf

Dr. Greg Vigna, birth injury attorney, states, “The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Fetus and Newborn reported that low 5-minute Apgar scores are associated with an increased risk of early postnatal mortality, cerebral palsy, seizures and mental retardation. A significant percentage of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who have a history of birth

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> *Greg Vigna, MD*

asphyxia, low Apgars, and a 'normal MRI' of the brain would show abnormalities with an advanced MRI with diffusion weight study and volumetric analysis that would be diagnostic of a hypoxic brain injury. These children have different trajectories of function that are worse than children without a history of birth asphyxiation."

Dr. Greg Vigna, national birth injury attorney, says "It has long been known that there is a link between birth asphyxia and autism spectrum disorder. The link can now be diagnosed with an MRI of the brain with diffusion weighted imaging and volumetric studies which identify abnormalities that would not be visualized on routine MRI of the brain."

Read a study about birth asphyxiation and autism spectrum disorder and the use of volumetric MRI to identify hypoxic brain damage: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13229-024-00596-3

Dr. Vigna concludes, "My law firm provides case evaluations with an in-house Board Certified Obstetrics and Gynecology to understand the events related to the birth. There are children who do not meet the clinical criteria for cerebral palsy with hypoxic brain injuries. Objective testing is necessary with diffusion MRI with volumetric assessment to rule out a hypoxic brain injury in children with normal CT scans and MRIs of the brain with a history of neonatal encephalopathy, hypoxia, with or without therapeutic cooling."

Read Dr. Vigna's book, The Mother's Guide to Birth Injury.

Dr. Vigna is a California and Washington DC lawyer who focuses on neurological injuries caused by medical negligence including birth injury. He is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Dr. Vigna co-counsels with Ben Martin Law Group, a national pharmaceutical injury law firm and birth injury lawyer in Dallas, Texas.

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