

How can this paradox of low IQ, but positive genetic correlations of autism risk with intelligence, be resolved? None of the papers on genetic correlations of autism with intelligence discuss possible explanations, or ways to investigate the conundrum further. I have proposed here the hypothesis that autism involves high but imbalanced intelligence, such that some or many genetically-based components of intelligence are enhanced, but imbalance across components increases risk and patterns of expression for autistic phenotypes, and for diagnoses. By this hypothesis, higher intelligence may co-occur with higher risk for imbalance and cognitive and affective consequences from it, given that the components of cognitive ability are expected to interact strongly and may do so to a greater degree at the higher end of ability. The “high intelligence imbalance” hypothesis is useful because it makes clear predictions, and thus directs attention toward specific forms of existing data and new, informative future data to collect.

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