

# *Simon Baron-Cohen*



Simon Baron-Cohen FBA (born 15 August 1958) is Professor of Developmental psychopathology at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

He is the Director of the University's Autism Research Centre, and a Fellow of Trinity College.

He has worked on autism, including the theory that autism involves degrees of mind-blindness and his later theory that autism is an extreme form of what he calls the "male brain."



# Personal life and education



Baron-Cohen completed a BA in Human Sciences at New College, Oxford, and an MPhil in Clinical Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.

He completed a PhD in Psychology at University College London; his doctoral research was in collaboration with his supervisor Uta Frith.

Baron-Cohen has three children, the eldest of whom is screenwriter. He has an elder brother Dan Baron Cohen and three younger siblings, brother Ashley and sisters Suzie and Liz.

# Autism research

Baron-Cohen was lead author in 1985 of the first study of children with autism and delays in the development of a theory of mind, known as ToM. The theory of mind is the ability to detect other people's emotions and thoughts, and it is a skill that according to Baron-Cohen's research is typically delayed developmentally in children with autism.

Baron-Cohen and his colleagues discovered in 1987 the first evidence that experiences in synaesthesia remain consistent over time; they also found synaesthesia to be measurable via neuroimaging techniques. His team has investigated whether synaesthesia is connected to autism.





# Autism research

In 1997, Baron-Cohen developed the empathising–systemizing theory, which theorises that a cognitive profile associated with math, science and technology skills, exists in families with autism spectrum disorders.



He suspects that if individuals with a "systemising" focus are selecting each other as mates, they are more likely to have children with autism.

In 2001 he developed the Autism Spectrum Quotient, a set of fifty questions that can be used to help determine whether or not an adult exhibits symptoms of autism.

# Autism research

Baron-Cohen developed the Mindreading software for special education, which was nominated for an award from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) interactive award in 2002.



His lab developed The Transporters, an animation series designed to teach children with autism to recognise and understand emotions. The series was also nominated for a BAFTA award.

# Organizations

Baron-Cohen is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS), the British Academy, and the Association for Psychological Science.

He is a BPS Chartered Psychologist.

He serves as Vice-President of the National Autistic Society (UK), and was the 2012 Chair of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guideline Development Group for adults with autism.



He has served as Vice-President of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR). He is co-editor in chief of the journal *Molecular Autism*.

# Recognition

Baron-Cohen was awarded the 1990 Spearman Medal from the BPS, the McAndless Award from the American Psychological Association, the 1993 May Davidson Award for Clinical Psychology from the BPS, and the 2006 presidents' Award from the BPS.



He was awarded the Kanner-Asperger Medal in 2013 by the Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft Autismus-Spektrum as a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to autism research.



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