

For More Information and Participation

Fellow autistic surgeons, this study is being done to help people like you but it cannot be done without your help. I would like you to consider participating but recognise that you will need to feel properly informed and comfortable before considering enrollment. If I have sparked your interest with this brochure and, if you would like to contact me for more information and/or further discussion about the possibility of participating, please look at my recruitment video and email me.

The information and recruitment video can be viewed using the following URL and password:

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<https://www.autisticsurgeonstudy.com>
password: 1108

The email address for contact is:

asdstudy@ucalgary.ca



RESEARCH STUDY

Autistic Surgeons Their Lived Experiences and Career Pathways

*A study by a surgeon, about
surgeons and for surgeons*

Ethics approved: Pro00147713

Background and Introduction

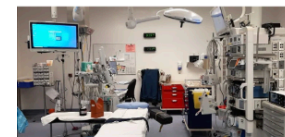
It is estimated that 2% to 3% doctors are autistic. Autistic people are drawn to the medical profession and their unique characteristics make them good doctors. They work in a wide variety of specialties but favour technical work like surgery.

The literature indicates that the lived experiences of autistic physicians vary. Their autism makes them different but almost nothing is known about the advantages and challenges this gives them. Well supported they can thrive and excel. Marginalized and stigmatized they can struggle and wither. Workplace stress, misunderstandings and sensory issues are common but little is known about these. Autistic physicians are vulnerable and worry about the risks of exposure. There is, however, a pressing need to learn more about them and to increase awareness of the strengths they bring to the profession.

Taking part in this type of research may feel risky but this study has been carefully designed incorporating many features for the confidentiality, safety and comfort of participants as well as the potential for providing benefits to them. I, the principal investigator, am an autistic surgeon myself. The research is legitimate and is being conducted in Canada with full Ethics approval at the University of Alberta.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the lived experiences of autistic surgeons so as to increase awareness and inform workplace lobbying for best possible integration of neurodiverse surgeons.



A surgeon's main workplace.

Study Design

Participation involves a series of completely confidential one-on-one loosely structured conversations and email correspondence with me, set up as a convenient, informative and comfortable experience. The number of interactions is not predetermined but it is hoped that participants will engage long enough for me to develop an understanding of their own specific lived experiences. Final results will be written up in a way that does not reveal the identities of participants. Results will also be shared with each participant prior to publication.

Potential Benefits and Risks

Potential benefits:

1. Being able to get to know another autistic surgeon.
2. The ability to communicate with a surgeon, who is showing interest in the issues, joys and challenges of being an autistic surgeon.
3. Being able to safely share information, perhaps previously taboo/secret/hidden, with another surgeon (not a psychiatrist or psychologist) in a constructive and safe situation.
4. Having the opportunity to discuss the literature about autistic physicians.

Potential risks:

The main potential risks are exposure and the possibility of marginalization and stigmatization. To combat these, the study is designed with multiple safeguards including encryption, passwords, pseudonyms, a dedicated safe email address and deidentification of documents. The planning has also closely followed university rules and regulations and has been transparent and the protocol is fully Ethics approved (Pro00147713). No-one, apart from the me will ever know the true identity of participants and published results will never reveal who they were.