

David Beverdorsdorf

University of Missouri researcher Dr. David Beverdorsdorf is discovering insights into autism, dementia and other neurological disorders.

Beverdorsdorf is working to determine possible causes of autism. He led a team of researchers in examining in utero stress, genetic markers, fatty acid profile and other prenatal factors in families of children with autism and families of children without autism. They discovered connections between prenatal stress, genetics, health and nutrition, and the predisposition for autism. Beverdorsdorf is also using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging to understand the role of the neurotransmitter noradrenaline in the treatment of autism, as well as effects of stress on the brain.

In addition, Beverdorsdorf is striving to make life easier for those with autism and neurological dysfunctions. He discovered that propranolol, a drug commonly used to treat high blood pressure and anxiety, could improve social functioning, language abilities and working memory in people with autism. He is now leading a team investigating whether elderberry juice, known for its anti-inflammatory effects, could improve cognition and delay progression of dementia in older adults.

Dr. David Beverdorsdorf is a professor and the William and Nancy Thompson Endowed Chair in radiology and neurology in the School of Medicine and psychological sciences in the College of Arts and Science. He is also a researcher at MU's Brain Imaging Center and the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

