

# Special Autism Diagnostic Clinic

Is it autism? This can be a difficult question to answer in children with visual impairments (VI). Based on results from the AEMC A/M Clinical Registry there appears to be an increased incidence of an autism diagnosis in individuals with A/M. There is clear evidence in the literature and anecdotally that individuals with VI have mannerisms that can include self-stimulatory behaviors, which may be confused with autistic behaviors. Developmental evaluation can be particularly difficult to interpret as children with visual impairments (VI) can have specific delays due to the VI alone. Evaluations by qualified professionals can differentiate these findings and ensure that the child with A/M has the appropriate educational environment. In other words we do not want to over-diagnose autism but we also do not want to “miss” it. Both diagnosis and management suffer when the diagnosis is made and additional services to help the child achieve his/her potential are not sought after.

We have created a multidisciplinary anophthalmia/microphthalmia clinic, which will provide a systematic approach to the evaluation and management of individuals with suspected autism. We will provide clinical genetics evaluation, genetic counseling, detailed developmental assessment by a developmental pediatrician and child psychologist as well as speech therapist, coordination of care and consultation with a teacher of the visually impaired.

If you are interested in having your child evaluated at this clinic please contact:

Tanya M. Bardakjian  
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Levy 2 West  
Philadelphia, PA 19141  
Phone: 215-456-8726  
Email: [bardakjiant@einstein.edu](mailto:bardakjiant@einstein.edu)

Limited funds are available to assist with travel. Low cost or free housing may also be available.

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## Has your child been diagnosed with SOX2 Syndrome?

**Help us learn more about SOX2 so we can provide better care and information.**

SOX2 syndrome is a relatively newly described syndrome. We have very little detailed or long-term information about what this disorder means for an individual who is diagnosed. We are starting a specific research project to collect detailed information on individuals of all ages with this syndrome in order to provide more specific guidance to families, doctors, therapists and educators. If your child has been diagnosed with SOX2 syndrome and you are willing to share medical records and clinical information please contact Tanya Bardakjian using the information above.