

What do we know about anxiety, depression, and mental health in childhood?

A new scoping review looked at anxiety, depression, and somatic symptoms in children who survived neonatal HIE — and points to a gap in how long families are followed.

2,917 studies screened

12 studies included

11 of 12 studies from Europe

All 12 used parent report

9 of 12 studies found children with HIE had more anxiety, depression, or somatic symptoms than comparison groups — though results varied widely across studies.

Anxiety

↑ Higher

Both studies that measured anxiety on its own found higher rates in children with HIE.

Depression

Mixed

Some studies found more depression symptoms in children with HIE; others found no difference.

Somatic Symptoms

No Difference

None of the studies measuring somatic complaints alone found a difference from comparison groups.

Cooling didn't eliminate the risk

Share of studies in each group that found more internalizing symptoms in children with HIE



THE BOTTOM LINE

Most HIE follow-up clinics stop seeing children around 30 months old — but anxiety tends to emerge in early elementary school, and depression often doesn't show up until the teen years. Researchers are calling for longer follow-up and more standardized screening tools so families and clinicians aren't missing the window.



Early-stage findings — This is a scoping review of existing studies, not a new test or treatment. The 12 studies used different tools, ages, and comparison groups, so results couldn't be combined into a single statistic and should not be used to predict any individual child's outcome.

Source: Yabalar N, Isik I, Aycan N, et al. Silent struggles of internalizing disorders in survivors of neonatal hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy: a scoping review. *Journal of Perinatology*. 2026. University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

HOPE for HIE