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Autism

November 2018

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Applying a SWOT analysis to inform educational provision of learners on the autism spectrum

Source: Advances in Autism (Early Cite)
Author(s): Claire Sciberras,
Requests for increased support within mainstream school settings within the field of autism tend to take place across most international educational scenarios. In light of such recommendation, the purpose of this paper is to outline how the implementation of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis within educational settings might be beneficial in order to improve the support provided for learners on the autism spectrum (AS).

Although a SWOT analysis framework is generally carried out in corporate domains for companies and firms to investigate their competitive impact within the marketplace so as to develop future concepts, this analysis structure may also be usefully applied within educational settings so as to inform practice. If implemented in an effective manner, a SWOT analysis will potentially provide a comprehensive synopsis of the issues and concerns which are relevant for considering and evolving the provision of support for students. Indeed, it will enable educational environments to enhance their strengths so as to increase appropriate opportunities and address the weaknesses within their services in order to potentially overcome their barriers and enhance the quality of life of learners on the spectrum. This paper includes the viewpoint of the author in relation to a SWOT analysis so as to inform practice for learners on the AS.

https://www.emeraldinsight.com/toc/aia/0/0

Diagnosis and treatment of ASD in women in secure and forensic hospitals

Author(s): Sarah Markham,
Source: Advances in Autism (Early Cite)
Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the experience and possibilities for misdiagnosis of women with ASD in secure and forensic hospitals, via the medium of a lived experience case study. To consider the clinical value of the patient perspective of and insight into their disorder. The case study is supplemented by relevant associations to the MHA Code of Practice, the CQC report, Monitoring the Mental Health Act (MHA) 2016–2017, published on 27 February 2018 and current research findings in the fields of service provision, quality of care and treatment of female patients with a diagnosis of ASD. A review and commentary of the author’s lived experience of a formal diagnostic assessment for ASD as a female patient in a secure and forensic hospital. In reviewing aspects of the author’s clinical assessment, the author has made contextual reference to the MHA Code of Practice, the CQC report, Monitoring the MHA 2016–2017, published on 27 February 2018, and current research findings. The account focuses on aspects of the author’s recent experience assessment and treatment for ASD which the author believes may be of use in informing clinical practice. Open-ended exploration of a lived experience account/case study of a diagnostic assessment of an adult female patient for ASD, demonstrating the possible ambiguity of responses to questionnaire-based assessment tools and other deficiencies inherent to the assessment process and care and treatment of adult female ASD sufferers in secure and forensic hospitals. The author uses the lived experience as a patient to review
and provide commentary on the clinical assessment for ASD. This review is, therefore, informed by an authentic patient perspective and not clinical perspectives. This paper highlights the need for further research into the diagnostic assessment of females for ASD in a secure and forensic hospitals. First, to encourage practitioners to extend their range of thinking to be more inclusive of the patient perspective when performing a diagnostic assessment. Second, to increase practitioner awareness of the deficiencies in the current service provision for adult female patients diagnosed with ASD in secure and forensic hospitals. To improve patient experience of diagnostic assessment for ASD and the quality of the assessment and patient outcomes in secure and forensic hospitals. The paper is original in concept in that it considers the inclusion of patient experience/views in assessment and formulation and links them to wider social policy and practice guidance. The case study is an authentic patient account informed by the author’s experience of secure and forensic psychiatric hospitals. The value of the paper may be determined by the extent to which the paper encourages practitioners to consider the patient perspective and experience of the diagnostic assessment and how this and subsequent care and treatment may affect the adult female patient in secure and forensic hospitals.

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**Advances in Autism**

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**Special Issue:**

**Inclusive educational practice for autistic learners**

**Special interests and inclusive academic learning: an autistic perspective**

**Author(s):** Frederik Boven,

**Abstract:** Many people with an autistic spectrum condition have one or more “special interests” which is more restricted, and which they pursue with more than average intensity. The purpose of this paper is to offer a first-person perspective on inclusion of special interests in academic learning. The paper describes examples of special interests of university students and offers recommendations for university teachers. The author combines the emerging strategy of using his own autobiographical material as research object with the more established method of conceptual analysis. The author finds that special interests can be a source of academic strength, but can also interfere with learning. The paper argues that including special interests in academic learning is an effective way of including students with autism in higher education, but requires some special provisions. Existing research has focused either on the special interests of persons with autism or on their inclusion in education, but the combination of these two issues has rarely been considered. The paper addresses this neglected topic from the inside perspective of a former student with autism who, after completing a research master's in philosophy, was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome at age 34. The author combines this inside perspective with knowledge of the theory and history of autism.


**How can Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter enable inclusion of and encourage participation of autistic pupils in a year 7 boy’s mainstream classroom?**

**Author(s):** Jane Elizabeth Gurnett,

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to facilitate a greater understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication in an open space learning (OSL) environment. This is an exploration of the premise that by using Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter as a scaffolding for learners on the autism spectrum, a “safe place” can be accessed. Using an action research model and following government guidelines, using common assessment framework analysing the findings using School’s assessment criteria model that is used for single exercises through to whole scheme of work: making–performing–evaluating (self-evaluation sheets/peer evaluation sheets/teacher evaluation). There has been hypothesis that people with ASD may be more able to track their heart beats for longer than neurotypicals. Kimberly et al.,(2015) suggest that empathetic abilities and emotional experiences in people with ASD can produce negative experiences, anxiety can occur and the interoceptive awareness and ability to positively relate to self can be caused to dislocate. The use of the rhythm of the heartbeat may aid communication skills in ASD learners. In the autistic learner, overload, caused by hypersensitivity/hyposensitivity, can also affect and be effected by environmental issues in OSL environment. The autistic learner can be deeply affected. Unlike a desk-based class there is nowhere to hide, no place of safety. By trying to find a common ground where the autistic learners can realise their full capacity the use of the heartbeat iambic rhythm can, the author posits, impact on the autistic learners sense of self and confidence, aiding learning. As Hunter (2015) espouses, the heartbeat is a nurturing instrument. The author advocates that the heartbeat is also a unilateral marker that unifies a class/the environment at the same time as comforting the autistic learner. There is an element in every being that has to be present from inception, the heartbeat, it is the first function an
embryo performs. The heartbeat also produces a primal symbiotic interdependency in mother and child. It is a pure connection. The author posits that the replication of this pure function can comfort, reassure and foster communication. There is no empirical evidence, but research is currently taking place at the Nisonger Centre at the Ohio State University, where, under the leadership of Dr Marc J. Tasse, pilot workshops have taken place. The author also has no empirical evidence as to why the heartbeat is instrumental in helping the autistic learner to communicate. The author gives the conjecture in the paper.


**Autism and dual immersion: sorting through the questions**

**Author(s):** Diana Baker,

**Abstract:** The dual immersion (DI) model of bilingual education, which focuses on educating language-minority and majority students side by side using the two languages in roughly equal proportions, is gaining popularity. And yet, students with disabilities – even those who are already multilingual – are routinely steered away from such programs in favor of English-only special education options. The paper aims to discuss these issues. This paper explores the potential benefits and challenges associated with including multilingual students with autism in DI classrooms, beginning with an exploration of literature related to students with autism who are also multilingual learners (MLLs) (irrespective of educational placement), followed by a small body of literature on the inclusion of students with disabilities in general in DI programs, and finally an analysis of the characteristics of DI classrooms to extrapolate about the ways in which this environment might be both supportive of and challenging for students with autism. The analysis reveals that DI programs are simultaneously well positioned (theoretically) and ill-equipped (practically) to effectively support MLLs who are also on the autism spectrum. In spite of mounting evidence that being multilingual may advantage children with autism, very little scholarship has even raised the question of whether students with autism might benefit from participation in bilingual programs where academic instruction is delivered in two languages (Beauchamp and MacLeod, 2017; Durán et al., 2016; Marinova-Todd et al., 2016; Seung et al., 2006). This paper identifies practical implications related to including students with autism in DI programs and suggests directions for future research.


**Inclusive school practices supporting the primary to secondary transition for autistic children: pupil, teacher, and parental perspectives**

**Author(s):** Keri Hoy,

**Abstract:** The primary to secondary school transition can have a significant and long-lasting impact on young people. Autistic children are particularly vulnerable to negative transition experiences; however, there is a lack of research examining effective practices and provision for these pupils. This case study involves a mainstream secondary school in the South of England, which has a dedicated Learning Support base. The purpose of this paper is to collect qualitative data on experiences of the primary to secondary school transition from multiple stakeholders. A photovoice activity followed by a semi-structured interview was conducted with five autistic pupils aged 12–16 years; semi-structured interviews were also carried out with six parents and four teachers. Five key themes emerged from the data in relation to effective practices: inclusion, child-centred approach, familiarisation, visual supports and communication and consistency. As a small-scale case study, there are limitations regarding generalisation. However, this research illuminates transition practices that are experienced as effective by autistic children, their families and teachers. Practical implications related to each of these themes are highlighted. These implications are important in the context of the mandatory responsibilities of schools in England to include the voices of children and young people with special educational needs in decisions about their education. The findings challenge a rights-based approach to inclusion and illustrate the importance of a needs-based approach which appropriately recognises and understands what autism means for children, their families and the teachers who support them.


**Exploring the use of Sidekicks! For children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**

**Author(s):** Birtwell, Kirstin B.; Platner, Amanda K.; Nowinski, Lisa A.

**Source:** Psychological Services; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Clinicians and educators are increasingly using technology within the context of existing therapies and teaching methodologies. The growing use of mobile clinical tools is particularly exciting for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as technologically based interventions have been shown to be both efficacious (to target academics, adaptive behavior, disruptive behavior, etc.) and accepted in this population (Odom et al., 2015). In addition, these tools have the potential to address two significant impediments in ASD intervention, the anxiety and/or skill deficits often associated with face-to-face interactions and skill generalization outside of the therapy office (Wieckowski & White, 2017). In other words, the use of technology may serve as an important preliminary or prerequisite step for face-to-face therapeutic progress. The purpose of this paper is to present a new, interactive clinical app that explicitly utilizes an individual's restricted interests to teach skills and improve communication. The
Designing technology for spatial needs: Routines, control and social competences of people with autism

Author(s): Rapp, Amon; Cena, Federica; Castaldo, Romina; Keller, Roberto; Tirassa, Maurizio

Source: International Journal of Human-Computer Studies; Dec 2018; vol. 120 ; p. 49-65

Abstract: Over the years, the relationship between technology and people with autism has been framed mainly in a medical model, where technology is primarily aimed at mitigating deficits and providing helps to overcome limitations. This has yielded a variety of Human-Computer Interaction designs addressed to improve the autistic individuals' daily tasks and behavior. In this article, we want to explore a different approach, by proposing a phenomenological take on the autistic lived experience, which could integrate the results achieved by the medical model, and offer a "first person perspective" on autism. More precisely, by adopting a cognitive approach to urbanism we want to explore how autistic individuals conceptualize and experience the spaces they inhabit. To this aim, we interviewed 12 adults with a diagnosis of autism asking them to recount their everyday movements and city living activities. Building on the study findings, we identified three kinds of spaces that characterize their life and outlined a series of design considerations to support technology interventions for satisfying their spatial needs. Then, during a design session, we developed our conceptualization as well as our design suggestions, yielding a more nuanced picture of how space is subjectively constructed by autistic people.

Database: PsycINFO

Sleep problems and their correlates in children with autism spectrum disorder: An indian study

Author(s): Tyagi, Vernika; Juneja, Monica; Jain, Rahul

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018

Abstract: Sleep problems were studied in both typically developing (TD) children and those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) using the Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children. Factors associated with these problems were also studied in children with ASD. Seventy-three children with ASD and their age and sex matched TD controls in age group of 3–12 years were enrolled in the study. Higher sleep problems were found in children with ASD than TD children. Most common sleep problem reported in children with ASD was Sleep Wake Transition Disorders, followed by Disorder of Initiation and Maintenance; while in TD controls, it was Sleep Breathing Disorders. Apart from severity of Autism; hyperactivity, sensory issues and poor motor skills were significantly associated with sleep problems, which may be important targets for intervention in children with sleep problems.

Database: PsycINFO

Childhood executive function predicts later autistic features and adaptive behavior in young autistic people: A 12-year prospective study

Author(s): Kenny, Lorcan; Cribb, Serena J.; Pellicano, Elizabeth

Source: Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology; Nov 2018

Abstract: Longitudinal studies of autistic people show that the behavioral features of autism generally endure into adulthood. Yet the prognostic indicators remain far from certain, especially for cognitively able individuals. Here, we test the predictive power of specific cognitive skills, namely theory of mind and executive function, measured in childhood, on young people’s autistic features and adaptive behavior 12 years later. Twenty-eight young autistic people (2 female) were seen twice within the space of 12 years. At Time 1 (M = 5 years; 7 months, SD = 11 months), participants were assessed on components of executive function (planning, inhibition and cognitive flexibility) and theory of mind (false-belief understanding). At Time 2, 12 years later (M = 17 years 10 months, SD = 1 year; 2 months), we measured participants’ autistic features and adaptive behavior. Only Time 1 executive function skills predicted significant variance in autistic adolescents’ autistic features, over and above variance attributable to early age, intellectual ability and theory of mind skills. Furthermore, early EF skills, in addition to early verbal ability and nonverbal ability, predicted significant variance in young people’s adaptive behavior at the 12-year follow-up. These long-term longitudinal findings clearly demonstrate that executive function measured in early childhood has prognostic significance in a sample of young autistic people approaching emerging adulthood and underscore their importance as a key target for early intervention and support.

Database: PsycINFO

Should I trust you? Autistic traits predict reduced appearance-based trust decisions
Facial impressions of trustworthiness guide social decisions in the general population, as shown by financial lending in economic Trust Games. As an exception, autistic boys fail to use facial impressions to guide trust decisions, despite forming typical facial trustworthiness impressions (Autism, 19, 2015a, 1002). Here, we tested whether this dissociation between forming and using facial impressions of trustworthiness extends to neurotypical men with high levels of autistic traits. Forty-six Caucasian men completed a multi-turn Trust Game, a facial trustworthiness impressions task, the Autism-Spectrum Quotient, and two Theory of Mind tasks. As hypothesized, participants’ levels of autistic traits had no observed effect on the impressions formed, but negatively predicted the use of those impressions in trust decisions. Thus, the dissociation between forming and using facial impressions of trustworthiness extends to the broader autism phenotype. More broadly, our results identify autistic traits as an important source of individual variation in the use of facial impressions to guide behaviour. Interestingly, failure to use these impressions could potentially represent rational behaviour, given their limited validity.

Outpatient psychotherapy for adults with high-functioning autism spectrum condition: Utilization, treatment satisfaction, and preferred modifications

Many adults with autism spectrum condition (ASC) desire outpatient psychotherapy (PT). This study compared reasons for seeking PT, experiences with PT, and modifications preferred with respect to PT of individuals with ASC to non-autistic individuals with depression (MDD). Furthermore, factors predictive for treatment satisfaction were identified in individuals with ASC. A total of 262 adults with ASC without intellectual impairment and 304 non-autistic controls with MDD were surveyed. In this pilot study both groups predominantly sought treatment for depressiveness. A low level of expertise with autism was the main reason for being declined by therapists and a contributing factor to the overall treatment dissatisfaction of patients with ASC. ASC patients desire adjustments such as written communication, and clearly structured sessions.

Supporting parents of a child with autism spectrum disorder: The french awakening

After being wrongfully blamed for their child’s disturbances, French parents of a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are now perceived as essential partners of care professionals. This shift in perspective has encouraged the development of parent training programs in the field of autism. In this paper, we present three programs currently implemented in France for parents of a child with ASD. We investigated their social validity, from the parents’ perspective. All three programs showed good social validity: attendance rate was good and parents were satisfied. In France, like elsewhere, more parents should be given the opportunity to participate in such programs to help them deal with the specific challenges of raising a child with ASD.
Abstract: The current study evaluated the effectiveness of a mobile application, Camp Discovery, designed to teach receptive language skills to children with autism spectrum disorder based on the principles of applied behavior analysis. Participants (N = 28) were randomly assigned to an immediate-treatment or a delayed-treatment control group. The treatment group showed significant gains, p < .001, M = 58.1, SE = 7.54, following 4 weeks of interaction with the application as compared to the control group, M = 8.4, SE = 2.13. Secondary analyses revealed significant gains in the control group after using the application and maintenance of acquired skills in the treatment group after application usage was discontinued. Findings suggest that the application effectively teaches the targeted skills.

Database: PsycINFO

Salience network connectivity and social processing in children with nonverbal learning disability or autism spectrum disorder

Author(s): Margolis, Amy E.; Pagliaccio, David; Thomas, Lauren; Banker, Sarah; Marsh, Rachel

Source: Neuropsychology; Nov 2018

Abstract: Objective: Nonverbal learning disability (NVLD) is a putative neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by spatial processing deficits as well as social deficits similar to those characteristic of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Nonetheless, NVLD may be a distinct disorder that is differentially associated with the functioning and connectivity of the salience (SN) and default mode (DMN) networks that support social processing. Thus, we sought to assess and compare connectivity across these networks in children with NVLD, ASD, and typically developing children. Method: Resting-state fMRI data were examined in 17 children with NVLD, 17 children with ASD selected from the Autism Brain Imaging Data Exchange (ABIDE), and 40 TD children (20 from ABIDE). Average DMN and SN functional connectivity and pairwise region-to-region connectivity were compared across groups. Associations with social impairment and IQ were assessed. Results: Children with NVLD showed reduced connectivity between SN regions (anterior insula to anterior cingulate and to rostral prefrontal cortex [rPFC]), whereas children with ASD showed greater connectivity between SN regions (supramarginal gyrus to rPFC) relative to the other groups. Both clinical groups showed higher levels of parent-reported social problems, which related to altered SN connectivity in the NVLD group. No differences were detected in overall average connectivity within or between networks. Conclusions: The social deficits common across children with NVLD and ASD may derive from distinct alterations in connectivity within the SN. Such findings represent the first step toward identifying a neurobiological signature of NVLD.

Impact statement General Scientific Summary—Nonverbal learning disability (NVLD) is a putative neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by spatial and social deficits. This study suggests that the social deficits common across children with NVLD and autism spectrum disorder may derive from distinct alterations in connectivity within the salience network, which is believed to support social processing.

Database: PsycINFO

Effects of delay, question type, and socioemotional support on episodic memory retrieval by children with autism spectrum disorder

Author(s): Almeida, Telma Sousa; Lamb, Michael E.; Weisblatt, Emma J.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018

Abstract: Twenty-seven autistic children and 32 typically developing (TD) peers were questioned about an experienced event after a two-week delay and again after a two-month delay, using the Revised National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHID) Investigative Interview Protocol. Recall prompts elicited more detailed and more accurate responses from children than recognition prompts. Autistic children recalled fewer correct narrative details than TD peers when questioned using open invitations, cued invitations, and directive questions. Nonetheless, they were as accurate as TD peers when responding to all types of prompts. The informativeness and accuracy of children’s reports remained unchanged over time. Social support was beneficial when children were interviewed for the first time but not after a longer delay.

Database: PsycINFO

Social connectedness and loneliness mediate the association between autistic traits and internalizing symptoms among young adults

Author(s): Stice, Lauren VanderBroek; Lavner, Justin A.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018

Abstract: Adults with autism and subclinical autistic traits report greater internalizing problems than their peers, but the psychological processes underlying these associations are not well understood. The current study used structural equation modeling to examine whether social experiences (social connectedness and loneliness) mediate the link between autistic traits and internalizing symptoms among 821 college students. Those with higher total Broader Autism Phenotype Questionnaire (BAPQ) scores reported lower social connectedness, which related to greater loneliness, and, in turn, greater anxious and depressive symptoms. Relations with specific BAPQ subscales were also examined. Results indicate that, among young adults, stronger subclinical autistic traits relate to greater mental health and social difficulties and point to the important role of social experiences in mental health adjustment.

Database: PsycINFO

Motion-capture patterns of voluntarily mimicked dynamic facial expressions in children and adolescents with and without asd
**The association of the broader autism phenotype with emotion-related behaviors in mothers of children with and without autism spectrum traits**

**Author(s):** Rea, Hannah M.; Factor, Reina S.; Swain, Deanna M.; Scarpa, Angela  
**Source:** Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018  
**Abstract:** Broader autism phenotype (BAP) characteristics (pragmatic language deficits, aloofness, and rigidity) are prevalent in families of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and may influence emotion-related behaviors. The current study analyzed associations among BAP characteristics with emotion-related behaviors in mothers of children with and without ASD. Twenty-seven mothers completed BAP and emotion regulation (ER) questionnaires. Maternal affect was coded during an interaction task. BAP rigidity negatively correlated with the ER strategy reappraisal. BAP total and pragmatic scores positively correlated with observed negative affect. Associations remained significant in step-wise regressions that controlled for other BAPQ subscale scores. Findings suggest that pragmatic difficulties may interfere with positive mother–child interactions and mothers with high rigidity may benefit from learning adaptive ER strategies.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Diagnosing autism spectrum disorder in children with low mental age**

**Author(s):** Miller, Lauren E.; Burke, Jeffrey D.; Robins, Diana L.; Fein, Deborah A.  
**Source:** Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018  
**Abstract:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnostic tools are not designed for mental ages (MA) below 12 months. Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) and Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) were examined in 2-year-olds with ASD-low MA (n = 53), Global Developmental Delay (GDD; n = 175), and ASD-higher MA (n = 425). ADOS and CARS demonstrated similar agreement with clinical diagnosis, but ADOS over-classified ASD in low MA, whereas CARS both over- and under-classified. All ADOS items differentiated GDD from ASD. Elementary social behaviors (e.g., eye contact, social interest) were similar across ASD groups, although advanced skills (e.g., pointing, play) were more impaired in ASD-low MA. ASD-low MA, a severe presentation, may require a modified ADOS algorithm to account for developmental delays.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Child-present and child-themed marital conflict in daily life of parents of children with and without autism spectrum disorder**

**Author(s):** Papp, Lauren M.; Hartley, Sigan L.  
**Source:** Developmental Psychology; Nov 2018  
**Abstract:** Parents of 5- to 12-year-old children (half had been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder [ASD] and half were typically developing) provided reports of the most significant marital conflict of the day and ratings of child behaviors problems on a daily basis for 14 days. Mothers and fathers in the ASD group reported having more conflicts in daily life with any children present and more conflicts with the target child present than their counterparts with typically developing children did. Fathers (but not mothers) in the ASD group reported more conflicts as including child-related themes, although parents across the groups did not differ in their reporting marital conflict that specifically discussed the study’s target child. Results from multilevel modeling revealed within-person associations between child presence during marital conflict and parents’ emotions; specifically, child presence was related to lower dyadic positivity and higher dyadic anger, according to both mothers and fathers. In addition, results identified significant, positive within-person associations between child presence during marital conflict and discussing certain conflict topics (increased likelihoods of discussing any children and the study’s target children). These direct associations were found consistently across mothers’ and fathers’ reports, and did not vary across ASD and comparison families. Multilevel models focused on implications of the marital conflict for the study’s target children generally found child presence during conflict and discussion of child-themed conflict topics to predict higher levels of behavior problems in daily life. One moderating effect was identified, with child presence during conflict related to higher behavior problems according to mothers in the ASD group but not those in the comparison group.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Child-present and child-themed marital conflict in daily life of parents of children with and without autism spectrum disorder**

**Author(s):** Zane, Emily; Yang, Zhaojun; Pozzan, Lucia; Guha, Tanaya; Narayanan, Shrikanth; Grossman, Ruth Bergida  
**Source:** Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018  
**Abstract:** Research shows that neurotypical individuals struggle to interpret the emotional facial expressions of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The current study uses motion-capture to objectively quantify differences between the movement patterns of emotional facial expressions of individuals with and without ASD. Participants volitionally mimicked emotional expressions while wearing facial markers. Recorded marker movement was grouped by expression valence and intensity. We used Growth Curve Analysis to test whether movement patterns were predictable by expression type and participant group. Results show significant interactions between expression type and group, and little effect of emotion valence on ASD expressions. Together, results support perceptions that expressions of individuals with ASD are different from—and more ambiguous than—those of neurotypical individuals’.

**Database:** PsycINFO
The "reading the mind in the eyes" test in autism spectrum disorders comparison with healthy controls: A systematic review and meta-analysis

**Author(s):** Peñuelas-Calvo, Inmaculada; Sareen, Aditya; Sevilla-Llewellyn-Jones, Julia; Fernández-Berrocal, Pablo

**Source:** Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** We conducted a meta-analysis of 18 studies to establish whether a relation exists between Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (RMET) performance and intelligence quotient (IQ) in individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and controls, taking into account relevant characteristics such as age, gender, and autism quotient. Our findings indicate that RMET performance was better in controls compared with those diagnosed with ASD. We found that RMET performance is dependent on full and verbal IQ and age in controls. However, RMET performance is negatively correlated with performance IQ in individuals diagnosed with ASD. These results suggest that the methodology applied by ASD when taking the RMET is different from control individuals and might depend less on verbal abilities.

**Database:** PsycINFO

Facial expression production in autism: A meta-analysis

**Author(s):** Trevisan, Dominic A.; Hoskyn, Maureen; Birmingham, Elina

**Source:** Autism Research; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** This meta-analysis summarized studies that examined group differences on the production of facial expressions in participants with ASD compared to typically developing or nonautistic clinical comparison groups. The overall summary effect from 67 effect sizes representing the average ASD-comparison group differences in facial expressions was −0.481, indicating a moderate effect size. We conducted subgroup analyses to group effect sizes according to separate facial expression abilities identified in the literature. These analyses revealed that participants with ASD display facial expressions less frequently and for less amount of time, and they are less likely to share facial expressions with others or automatically mimic the expressions of real faces or face stimuli. Their facial expressions are also judged to be lower in quality and are expressed less accurately. However, participants with ASD do not express emotions less intensely, nor is their reaction time of expression onset slower in response to odors, startling sensations, or in response to face stimuli in mimicry studies. ASD-comparison group differences were moderated by matching procedures, age, and intellectual functioning of the ASD participants suggesting that persons with higher IQ and larger number of accumulated life experiences are better able to produce facial expressions that are more consistent with "neurotypical" norms. Group differences were also stronger for "covertly elicited" than "explicitly elicited" facial expressions suggesting individuals with ASD may naturally produce facial expressions differently from other populations, but are less impaired in expressing emotions typically when prompted to do so in a laboratory setting. Lay Summary We reviewed studies that compared facial expressions in people with and without autism. Results revealed that facial expressions of people with autism are atypical in appearance and quality and are used atypically to regulate social interactions. The magnitude of these differences was influenced by participant characteristics (e.g. age and intellectual functioning), and by how facial expressions were measured and analyzed in various studies.

**Database:** PsycINFO

Life after an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis: A comparison of stress and coping profiles of African American and Euro-American caregivers

**Author(s):** Williams, Takeshia V.; Hartmann, Kathrin; Paulson, James F.; Raffaele, C. Teal; Urbano, Maria R.

**Source:** Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** The purpose of the present study was to understand how caregiver stress and coping behaviors impact African American and Euro-American families differently when caring for a child with autism. This study used discriminate function analysis to contrast the stress and coping profiles of Euro-American caregivers who are more acculturated with the majority culture with African American caregivers who ascribe to more traditional values. A sample of 103 families was recruited (52 Euro-American, 51 African American). African American families reported significantly more stress and utilizing more varied coping strategies than their Euro-American counterparts. Additional differences were found between the high and low acculturated African American groups such that low acculturated African Americans were more likely to engage in religious coping.

**Database:** PsycINFO

The causative variants of amyloidosis in the autism

**Author(s):** Akouchekian, Mansoureh; Hakim Shooshtari, Mitra; Heidary, Hamed; Zahedi Abghari, Fateme; Moeinian, Parsia

**Source:** International Journal of Neuroscience; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Purpose: Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) consist of a group of neurodevelopmental disorders that include autistic behavior, Asperger’s syndrome and pervasive developmental disabilities. According to the increasing observations that patients with mitochondrial disorders have symptoms associated with ASD, we have aimed to analyze the role of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) variation in autistic patients. Material and methods: We selected children with autistic behaviors (15–60 CARS Score). The mitochondrial DNA extraction process was done by GeNet Bio DNA extraction kit. The regions of interest were amplified using independent PCR runs. After purification of PCR
products, both strands were sequenced by Big Dye Termination system in a directly determined automated sequencing on an ABI 3700 capillary sequencer machine using both primers. All sequencing results were analyzed using bioinformatics’ tools sequencer software 5.

Results: In this study, 31 samples were examined, which 15 unique variants were detected in genes related to COXI-III. The most frequent variant (30.76%) were related to COX1 with amino acid change A → A. The only significant pathogenic variant was C8264G, except for C8264G, all variants seemed to be homoplasmic substitution. Conclusion: In our study, among the variations we found, one variant what probably had an interesting association with possible amyloidosis, had been reported in patient with autism previously. It is hoped that with finding more definable genetic and biological markers, the autistic children diagnosis and treatment will be more effective.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Predictive language processing in preschool children with autism spectrum disorder: An eye-tracking study**

**Author(s):** Zhou, Peng; Zhan, Likan; Ma, Huimin

**Source:** Journal of Psycholinguistic Research; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Sentence comprehension relies on the abilities to rapidly integrate different types of linguistic and nonlinguistic information. The present study investigated whether Mandarin-speaking preschool children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are able to use verb information predictively to anticipate the upcoming linguistic input during real-time sentence comprehension. 26 five-year-olds with ASD, 25 typically developing (TD) five-year-olds and 24 TD four-year-olds were tested using the visual world eye-tracking paradigm. The results showed that the 5-year-olds with ASD, like their TD peers, exhibited verb-based anticipatory eye movements during real-time sentence comprehension. No difference was observed between the ASD and TD groups in the time course of their eye gaze patterns, indicating that Mandarin-speaking preschool children with ASD are able to use verb information as effectively and rapidly as TD peers to predict the upcoming linguistic input.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Thinking ahead: Incremental language processing is associated with receptive language abilities in preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder**

**Author(s):** Venker, Courtney E.; Edwards, Jan; Saffran, Jenny R.; Ellis Weismer, Susan

**Source:** Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** In typical development, listeners can use semantic content of verbs to facilitate incremental language processing—a skill that is associated with existing language skills. Studies of children with ASD have not identified an association between incremental language processing in semantically-constraining contexts and language skills, perhaps because participants were adolescents and/or children with strong language skills. This study examined incremental language processing and receptive language in young children with ASD with a range of language skills. Children showed a head start when presented with semantically-constraining verbs (e.g., Read the book) compared to neutral verbs (e.g., Find the book). Children with weaker receptive language showed a smaller head start than children with stronger receptive language skills, suggesting continuity between typical development and ASD.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Head impact severity measures for small social robots thrown during meltdown in autism**

**Author(s):** Alhaddad, Ahmad Yaser; Cabibihan, John-John; Bonarini, Andrea

**Source:** International Journal of Social Robotics; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Social robots have gained a lot of attention recently as they have been reported to be effective in supporting therapeutic services for children with autism. However, children with autism may exhibit a multitude of challenging behaviors that could be harmful to themselves and to others around them. Furthermore, social robots are meant to be companions and to elicit certain social behaviors. Hence, the presence of a social robot during the occurrence of challenging behaviors might increase any potential harm. In this paper, we identified harmful scenarios that might emanate between a child and a social robot due to the manifestation of challenging behaviors. We then quantified the harm levels based on severity indices for one of the challenging behaviors (i.e. throwing of objects). Our results showed that the overall harm levels based on the selected severity indices are relatively low compared to their respective thresholds. However, our investigation of harm due to throwing of a small social robot to the head revealed that it could potentially cause tissue injuries, subconcussive or even concussive events in extreme cases. The existence of such behaviors must be accounted for and considered when developing interactive social robots to be deployed for children with autism.

**Database:** PsycINFO

**Neural evidence for reduced automaticity in processing emotional prosody among men with high levels of autistic traits**

**Author(s):** Lui, Ming; So, Wing-Chee; Tsang, Yiu-Kei

**Source:** Physiology & Behavior; Nov 2018; vol. 196; p. 47-58

**Abstract:** This study aimed to examine individual differences in the integration of emotional prosody when processing semantic meaning in speech among men with high and low levels of autistic traits, as measured by the Autism
Spectrum Quotient (AQ). The behavioral and neural responses of high- and low-AQ men during semantic valence judgment were compared. The stimuli were positive or negative words spoken with either happy or sad prosody; in other words, the prosody was either congruous or incongruous to the valence of meaning. Participants were required to judge the (positive vs. negative) valence of word meaning as accurately and as quickly as possible while ignoring emotional prosody. Behavioral results showed that high-AQ men responded significantly more slowly than low-AQ men in all stimulus conditions, indicating lower automaticity in processing emotional speech. Neural data revealed that low-AQ men (but not high-AQ men) had significantly increased N200 and N400 amplitudes for incongruous (compared to congruous) stimuli spoken with happy prosody. Our findings supported our hypotheses that high levels of autistic traits are associated with reduced behavioral automaticity and less differential neural resources allocated to processing emotional speech stimuli with different cognitive demands.

Database: PsycINFO

The broad autism phenotype and emotion regulation: The mediating role of autobiographical memory specificity

Author(s): McDonnell, Christina G.; Nuttall, Amy K.

Source: Personality and Individual Differences; Nov 2018; vol. 134; p. 131-136

Abstract: The broad autism phenotype (BAP) refers to subclinical traits associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), including language and personality differences, that are present among biological relatives of individuals with ASD and the general population. BAP traits are associated with emotional impairments, and there is a need to examine (1) how BAP traits relate to emotion regulation (ER), a key transdiagnostic factor that relates to a broad range of psychopathology and is central to ASD, and (2) mediators of this association. Reduced autobiographical memory specificity (AMS) is an avoidant cognitive style referring to difficulties retrieving specific memories that is disrupted in ASD and predicts a range of internalizing symptoms related to ER. The current study examines how BAP traits relate to ER, and whether AMS mediates these associations, among a sample of 108 emerging adult siblings of individuals with ASD who had not been diagnosed with ASD themselves. Participants completed standardized measures of BAP (Broad Autism Phenotype Questionnaire), ER (Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale), and AMS (computerized AMT). BAP factors demonstrated differential patterns of relations with ER. Aloofness negatively predicted AMS, and positive and negative AMS differentially mediated the effect of aloofness on ER. Limitations and future directions are discussed.

Database: PsycINFO

Editorial: Autistic social behaviors and the half-empty, half-full cup

Author(s): Zeanah, Charles H.

Source: Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry; Nov 2018; vol. 59 (no. 11); p. 1125-1126

Abstract: Comments on an article by W. Mandy et al. (see record 2018-18032-001). The paper by Mandy and colleagues extends work on the social behaviors characteristic of children with autism, and to a degree, the question of plasticity in the phenotypic picture. The investigators assessed children, using the Social Communication Disorders Checklist (SDCD), in the well-known Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), a general population, longitudinal cohort study. The assessments were conducted at from middle childhood to mid-adolescence. They found sex-specific trajectories of ‘autistic social traits’ (AST). Boys’ had greater elevation in AST as a group than girls and were more also likely to be in the clinical range of the SCDC at age 7. Both groups’ scores declined between 7 and 10 years, but girls’ scores then increased between 10 and 16 years and were not significantly different from boys by age 16. An immediate question is how much these findings have to say about autism versus sex differences in aberrant social behaviors outside of the spectrum. Of note, the pattern of findings was similar even for those with extreme scores, but more work will be necessary to determine how what was measured relates to autism. This would bolster the importance of the findings for understanding sex differences in autism spectrum disorders.

Database: PsycINFO

Brief report: A survey of autism research priorities across a diverse community of stakeholders

Author(s): Frazier, Thomas W.; Dawson, Geraldine; Murray, Donna; Shih, Andy; Sachs, Jessica Snyder; Geiger, Angela

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3965-3971

Abstract: Inclusion of stakeholder voices in the allocation of research funding can increase the relevance of results and improve community engagement in research. We describe the results of an online survey that gathered input from community stakeholders regarding autism research priorities. A demographically diverse sample of respondents (N = 6004; 79.1% female; 72.5% ages 30–59; 86.4% USA) completed the survey. Results indicated a preference for applied relative to basic science topics, though both basic and applied science areas were rated as important. Respondents gave their highest ratings to research focused on co-occurring conditions, health and well-being, adult transition, and lifespan issues. These results can guide decision-making by public and private funders when developing science funding priorities and engaging in science dissemination activities.

Database: PsycINFO

Differences of symptom distribution across adult age in high functioning individuals on the autism spectrum using subscales of the autism spectrum quotient

Database: PsycINFO
Training physical therapists in early ASD screening

Author(s): Ben-Sasson, Ayelet; Atun-Einy, Osnat; Yahav-Jonas, Gal; Lev-On, Shimona; Gev, Tali

Abstract: Physical therapists (PTs) are often one of the first professionals to evaluate children at risk. To examine the effect of an early screening training on pediatric PTs: (1) knowledge of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), (2) clinical self-efficacy, and (3) identification of markers. Twenty-six PTs participated in a 2-day "Early ASD Screening" workshop. The ASD Knowledge and Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, and video case study analysis were completed pre- and post-training. Changes following training were significant for ASD knowledge related to etiology and learning performance, early signs, risk factors, and clinical self-efficacy. Rating the videoed case study after the training, was significantly more accurate than it was before. Training PTs is important for enhancing early identification of ASD.

Young adults on the autism spectrum: The struggle for appropriate services

Author(s): Anderson, Connie; Butt, Catherine

Abstract: In the United States, young adults with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) lose federally mandated supports upon leaving high school. To arrange adult services, families must prove their young adult’s eligibility and find competent service providers. National-level statistics regarding receipt of appropriate adult services are discouraging, but little is known about families’ lived experience with regard to services. Therefore, qualitative interviews focused on the search for and satisfaction with adult services were conducted with parents of young adults with ASD, then analyzed using the constant comparative method. Emergent themes included Bureaucracy and Fighting for Access, Staffing Issues, Program Suitability, and “Doing It Yourself.” The need to improve service access and delivery is discussed, as are issues facing specific ASD subgroups.

Enhanced sensitivity to angry voices in people with features of the broader autism phenotype

Author(s): Yap, Valerie M. Z.; McLachlan, Neil M.; Scheffer, Ingrid E.; Wilson, Sarah J.

Abstract: The present study examined whether the ability to recognize vocal emotional expressions is negatively related to features of the Broader Autism Phenotype (BAP) in the general population. We assessed 61 typically developing adults on a BAP self-report measure (Broader Autism Phenotype Questionnaire) and a purpose-developed online emotion recognition task for efficient delivery of non-linguistic vocal stimuli corresponding to the six basic emotions. Contrary to expectations, we found that higher self-ratings of rigid BAP traits correlated with better recognition accuracy and higher intensity ratings for angry voices. We interpret this anger-specific association as an advantage for enhanced threat detection in the BAP and discuss this finding in the broader context of personality research and interpersonal theory.

Response to Distress varies by social impairment and familiarity in infants at risk for autism

Author(s): Dowd, Alexandra C.; Martinez, Kassandra; Davidson, Bridget C.; Hixon, J. Gregory; Neal-Beever, A. Rebecca

Abstract: Early impaired response to social partners’ distress may negatively impact subsequent social development. Identifying factors contributing to successful responding may inform assessment and intervention. This study explores how: (1) social impairment, and (2) partner familiarity relate to response to partners’ distress. Infants with and without older siblings with ASD were assessed at 12 (n = 29) and 15 (n = 35) months for social impairment markers, and responses to mother and experimenter each feigning distress. Infants with more social impairment showed less attention and affect at 15, but not 12 months. Infants attended more to the unfamiliar person, but exhibited greater affect toward the familiar person at 12 months. Results revealed social impairment and familiarity were separately related to infant response to partners’ distress.
Sleep and challenging behaviors in the context of intensive behavioral intervention for children with autism

Author(s): Abel, Emily A.; Schwichtenberg, A. J.; Brodhead, Matthew T.; Christ, Sharon L.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3871-3884

Abstract: This study examined the associations between sleep and challenging behaviors for average and night-to-night fluctuations in sleep, in 39 children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) receiving intensive behavioral intervention (IBI). Child sleep was recorded (via actigraphy) for five nights in conjunction with clinician-reported observations of challenging behaviors. Results indicated that on average, poor sleep was associated with higher rates of repetitive behavior, negative affect, and a composite of overall challenging behaviors. These findings suggest that average sleep patterns are important within the context of IBI (rather than night-to-night fluctuations). Interventions aimed at improving overall patterns of sleep may have important cascading effects on challenging behaviors and developmental outcomes for children with ASD and their families.

Intrinsic and extrinsic predictors of emotion regulation in children with autism spectrum disorder

Author(s): Fenning, Rachel M.; Baker, Jason K.; Moffitt, Jacquelyn

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3858-3870

Abstract: Difficulties regulating emotion have been linked to comorbid psychopathology in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but little empirical work has examined predictors of dysregulation in this population. Forty-six families of children with ASD participated in a laboratory visit that included direct measurement of children's IQ, ASD symptoms, and psychophysiological reactivity. Child emotion regulation was observed during independent and co-regulatory tasks, and parental scaffolding was rated in the dyadic context. ASD symptom severity emerged as the strongest predictor of child emotion dysregulation across contexts. Child age and parental scaffolding also uniquely predicted child dysregulation in the dyadic task. Implications for conceptualizing intrinsic and extrinsic influences on emergent emotion regulation in children with ASD are discussed, as are applications to intervention.

Treatment for higher-order restricted repetitive behaviors (H-RRB) in children with autism spectrum disorder

Author(s): Lin, C. Enjey; Koegel, Robert

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3831-3845

Abstract: Restricted repetitive behaviors (RRB) are one of the core symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Evidence suggests that higher-order RRB (H-RRB) are particularly challenging and can negatively impact family functioning (e.g., insistence on sameness, following idiosyncratic routines). The study examined the effects of a parent-implemented behavior intervention using a multiple baseline single case experimental design in three young children with ASD. The intervention involved self-management procedures and included principles of pivotal response treatment during which parents provided bids for children to vary from H-RRB and children obtained points for engaging in these other interests and activities. Results showed improvements in child behavior, parent and child affect and interactions, children's engagement in family activities, and overall parent ratings of RRB.

Small-group technology-assisted instruction: Virtual teacher and robot peer for individuals with autism spectrum disorder

Author(s): Saadatzi, Mohammad Nasser; Pennington, Robert C.; Welch, Karla C.; Graham, James H.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3816-3830

Abstract: The authors combined virtual reality technology and social robotics to develop a tutoring system that resembled a small-group arrangement. This tutoring system featured a virtual teacher instructing sight words, and included a humanoid robot emulating a peer. The authors used a multiple-probe design across word sets to evaluate the effects of the instructional package on the explicit acquisition and vicarious learning of sight words instructed to three children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the robot peer. Results indicated that participants acquired, maintained, and generalized 100% of the words explicitly instructed to them, made fewer errors while learning the words common between them and the robot peer, and vicariously learned 94% of the words solely instructed to the robot.

A retrospective chart review of children with ASD's individual education plans compared to subsequent independent psychological evaluations

Author(s): Gelbar, Nicholas W.; Bruder, Mary Beth; DeBiase, Emily; Molteni, John D.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3808-3815
Abstract: The heterogeneity of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) makes it difficult for school-based professionals to develop effective Individual Education Plans (IEP) for this group. Limited research exists on the quality of IEP programs for individuals with ASD. This article summarizes the results of a retrospective chart review from an outpatient diagnostic center. Researchers collected data from IEPs and subsequent psychological evaluations of 75 individuals diagnosed with ASD. The implications of these results for future research and practice are discussed.

Database: PsycINFO

Effectiveness of a SCERTS model-based intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Hong Kong: A pilot study

Author(s): Yu, Lu; Zhu, Xiaojin

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3794-3807

Abstract: A SCERTS model-based intervention with different durations (5-month vs. 10-month) was provided to 122 children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (age = 53.43 ± 9.05 months) in Hong Kong. Before and after the intervention, the children were assessed with the Chinese Psychoeducational Profile-Third Edition (CPEP-3) and the Developmental Assessment Chart (DAC). Educators and parents expressed their views toward the intervention in focus groups. Results showed that participating children improved significantly in their social communication and emotional behavior after the intervention, as measured by DAC and CPEP-3. Likewise, educators and parents had positive views toward the intervention and noted the children’s improvement. The results suggest that a SCERTS model-based intervention can improve social communication, emotional regulation, and other skills in children with ASD.

Database: PsycINFO

Leisure participation patterns for school age youth with autism spectrum disorders: Findings from the 2016 National Survey of Children’s Health

Author(s): Ratcliff, Karen; Hong, Ickpyo; Hilton, Claudia

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3783-3793

Abstract: Leisure activity participation is important for health and well-being. This study examined similarities and differences between typically developing children and those with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) from 6 to 17 years old in physical, recreational, social, skill, and jobs/chores activities from a large national database. Findings revealed that children with ASD had significantly lower participation levels than those without ASD between 11 and 17 years old. They suggest an increasing disparity among many types of leisure participation for children and youth with ASD as they age, eventually leading to limited participation in adult activities. They reinforce the importance of intervention at an early age to increase participation in these activities to promote development of skills that contribute to adult competencies.

Database: PsycINFO

Maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy and the risk of autism spectrum disorders in offspring: A retrospective analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study

Author(s): Gallagher, C.; McCarthy, F. P.; Ryan, R. M.; Khashan, A. S.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3773-3782

Abstract: The objective of this retrospective analysis of the longitudinal Millennium Cohort Study was to examine whether maternal alcohol consumption in pregnancy (MACP) is associated with the development of childhood autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Data on MACP and ASD were obtained from parental questionnaires. There were 18,168 singleton mother–child pairs with data on MACP, and 12,595 answered the question on ASD when the children were 11 years old. No statistically significant association was found between MACP and ASD for light (OR 0.78, 95% CI 0.35–1.79), moderate (OR 0.89, 95% CI 0.35–2.27), or heavy (OR 1.54, 95% CI 0.56–4.21) MACP. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy was not associated with the risk of developing ASD in this study cohort.

Database: PsycINFO

Autism diagnosis in the United Kingdom: Perspectives of autistic adults, parents and professionals

Author(s): Crane, Laura; Batty, Richard; Adeyinka, Hanna; Goddard, Lorna; Henry, Lucy A.; Hill, Elisabeth L.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3761-3772

Abstract: Accessing an autism diagnosis is a key milestone, both for an individual and their family. Using a qualitative methodology, the current study examined the views and experiences of ten autistic adults, ten parents of children on the autism spectrum, and ten professionals involved in autism diagnosis, all based in the United Kingdom (UK). Interviewing these 30 respondents about the diagnostic process and subsequent support options, the goal was to identify aspects of the diagnostic process that are working well, and areas in which improvements are needed. Using thematic analysis, three key themes were identified: the process of understanding and accepting autism; multiple barriers to satisfaction with the diagnostic process; and inadequate post-diagnostic support provision.

Database: PsycINFO

A longitudinal study of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder before age three: School services at three points time for three levels of outcome disability

Author(s): Crane, Laura; Batty, Richard; Adeyinka, Hanna; Goddard, Lorna; Henry, Lucy A.; Hill, Elisabeth L.

Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3794-3807

Abstract: This study examined the views and experiences of ten autistic adults, ten parents of children on the autism spectrum, and ten professionals involved in autism diagnosis, all based in the United Kingdom (UK). Interviewing these 30 respondents about the diagnostic process and subsequent support options, the goal was to identify aspects of the diagnostic process that are working well, and areas in which improvements are needed. Using thematic analysis, three key themes were identified: the process of understanding and accepting autism; multiple barriers to satisfaction with the diagnostic process; and inadequate post-diagnostic support provision.

Database: PsycINFO
The severe end of the spectrum: Insights and opportunities from the Autism Inpatient Collection (AIC)

Author(s): Siegel, Matthew
Source: Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders; Nov 2018; vol. 48 (no. 11); p. 3641-3646

Abstract: Research on individuals severely affected by autism, including those who are minimally verbal, have intellectual disability or challenging behaviors, has become less common. The Autism Inpatient Collection (AIC) was initiated so data on this group is available to the research community. Ten studies utilizing phenotypic data from the first 350 AIC participants are presented. Greater autism severity, sleep disturbance, and psychiatric disorders are risks for hospitalization; fluently verbal youth experience more depression and oppositional symptoms; lower adaptive/coping skills are associated with increased problem behaviors; lower IQ is a risk for SIB; post-traumatic and suicidal symptoms are common; and challenging behaviors improve with specialized inpatient treatment. A new measure of emotion regulation and prescribing practices are described and future research discussed.

Database: PsycINFO

Assessing the accuracy of the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Author(s): Yuen, Tracy; Penner, Melanie; Carter, Melissa T.; Szatmari, Peter; Ungar, Wendy J.
Source: Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology; Nov 2018; vol. 60 (no. 11); p. 1093-1100

Abstract: Aim: The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) could be appropriate for universal screening for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at 18 months and 24 months. Validation studies, however, reported differences in psychometric properties across sample populations. This meta-analysis summarized its accuracy measures and quantified their change in relation to patient and study characteristics. Method: Four electronic databases (MEDLINE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, and Embase) were searched to identify articles published between January 2001 and May 2016. Bayesian regression models pooled study-specific measures. Meta-regressions covariates were age at screening, study design, and proportion of males. Results: On the basis of the 13 studies included, the pooled sensitivity was 0.83 (95% credible interval [CI] 0.75–0.90), specificity was 0.51 (95% CI 0.41–0.61), and positive predictive value was 0.53 (95% CI 0.43–0.63) in high-risk children and 0.06 (95% CI < 0.01–0.14) in low-risk children. Sensitivity was higher for screening at 30 months compared with 24 months. Interpretation: Findings indicate that the M-CHAT performs with low to moderate accuracy in identifying ASD among children with developmental concerns, but there was a lack of evidence on its performance in low-risk children or at age 18 months. Clinicians should account for a child’s age and presence of developmental concern when interpreting their M-CHAT score. What this paper adds: 1. The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) performs with low-to-moderate accuracy in children with developmental concerns. 2. There is limited evidence supporting its use at 18 months or in low-risk children.

Database: PsycINFO

Early screening instruments for autism spectrum disorder: Promising, but more is needed

Author(s): Roeyers, Herbert
Source: Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology; Nov 2018; vol. 60 (no. 11); p. 1068

Abstract: Comments on an article by Tracy Yuen et al. (see record 2018-34279-001). The systematic review and meta-analysis by Yuen et al. confirmed what could already be suspected from wellknown published studies: the accuracy of the M-CHAT in high-risk children (children with developmental concerns) is unsatisfactory, while there is insufficient evidence to judge its sensitivity and specificity in 18-month-olds or in low-risk children, i.e. on a population level. The latter also applies to the revised version of the M-CHAT. The main goal of mental health screening is to identify individuals with mental health problems in need of intervention. The most often reported goal of early ASD screening is to diagnose children as early as possible and to start an intervention. There is growing evidence that early intervention leads to sustained improvements and hence better outcomes and a better quality of life, but at the same time more and better (follow-up) research is needed. The current findings on early intervention are also described as promising and encouraging.
Virtual environments as an assessment modality with pediatric ASD populations: A brief report

Author(s): Duffield, Tyler C.; Parsons, Thomas D.; Landry, Allisen; Karam, Shaza; Otero, Tiffany; Mastel, Sarah; Hall, Trevor A.

Source: Child Neuropsychology; Nov 2018; vol. 24 (no. 8); p. 1129-1136

Abstract: Virtual environments (VEs) have demonstrated promise as a neuropsychological assessment modality and may be well suited for the evaluation of children suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Some recent studies indicate their potential for enhancing reliability, ecologically validity, and sensitivity over traditional neuropsychological evaluation measures. Although research using VEs with ASD is increasing to the degree that several reviews of the literature have been conducted, the reviews to date lack rigor and are not necessarily specific to cognitive or neuropsychological assessment as many focus on intervention. The aim of this project was to comprehensively examine the current literature status of neuropsychological assessment in pediatric ASD using VEs by conducting a systematic review. Specifically, psychometric comparisons of VEs to traditional neuropsychological assessment measures that examined reliability, validity, and/or diagnostic accuracy for pediatric individuals, age 18 and below, with ASD were sought. The search using key words yielded 899 manuscripts, 894 of which were discarded for not meeting inclusion criteria. The remaining five met exclusion criteria. Therefore, the systematic review was modified to a brief report. These findings (or lack thereof) indicate a significant gap in the literature in that...
psychometric comparisons of these tools for the neuropsychological assessment of pediatric individuals with ASD are lacking. An important future direction of research will be extending the demonstrated incremental validity of VE neuropsychological assessment with other neurodevelopmental (e.g., attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and adult populations to pediatric ASD populations.

Database: PsycINFO

**Hot and cool executive function in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder: Cross-sectional developmental trajectories**

**Author(s):** Kouklari, Evangelia-Chrysanthi; Tsermentseli, Stella; Monks, Claire P.

**Source:** Child Neuropsychology; Nov 2018; vol. 24 (no. 8); p. 1088-1114

**Abstract:** The development of executive function (EF) in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has only been investigated using "cool"-cognitive-EF tasks. Little is known about the development of "hot"-affective-EF and whether it follows a similar developmental pathway. This study employed a cross-sectional developmental trajectories approach to examine the developmental changes in cool (working memory, inhibition, and planning) and hot EF (delay discounting and affective decision-making) of ASD participants (n = 79) and controls (n = 91) relative to age and IQ, shedding more light on the hot–cool EF organization. The developmental trajectories of some aspects of cool EF (working memory and planning) differed significantly as a function of age in ASD participants relative to controls. For both hot EFs, no significant age-related changes were found in either group. These findings extend our understanding regarding the maturation of EF from childhood through adolescence in ASD.

Database: PsycINFO

**Visual and linguistic narrative comprehension in autism spectrum disorders: Neural evidence for modality-independent impairments**

**Author(s):** Coderre, Emily L.; Cohn, Neil; Slipher, Sally K.; Chernenok, Mariya; Ledoux, Kerry; Gordon, Barry

**Source:** Brain and Language; Nov 2018; vol. 186; p. 44-59

**Abstract:** Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) have notable language difficulties, including with understanding narratives. However, most narrative comprehension studies have used written or spoken narratives, making it unclear whether narrative difficulties stem from language impairments or more global impairments in the kinds of general cognitive processes (such as understanding meaning and structural sequencing) that are involved in narrative comprehension. Using event-related potentials (ERPs), we directly compared semantic comprehension of linguistic narratives (short sentences) and visual narratives (comic panels) in adults with ASD and typically-developing (TD) adults. Compared to the TD group, the ASD group showed reduced N400 effects for both linguistic and visual narratives, suggesting comprehension impairments for both types of narratives and thereby implicating a more domain-general impairment. Based on these results, we propose that individuals with ASD use a more bottom-up style of processing during narrative comprehension.

Database: PsycINFO

**Weighted Walking Influences Lower Extremity Coordination in Children on the Autism Spectrum.**

**Author(s):** Eggleston, Jeffrey D; Landers, Merrill R; Bates, Barry T; Nagelhout, Ed; Dufek, Janet S

**Source:** Perceptual and motor skills; Dec 2018; vol. 125 (no. 6); p. 1103-1122

Available at Perceptual and motor skills - from EBSCO (MEDLINE Complete)

**Abstract:** There is sparse quantitative research regarding gait coordination patterns of children on the autism spectrum, though previous studies, relying only upon observational data, have alluded to characteristically poor movement coordination. This study compared walking with a weighted vest, a backpack carriage, and an unloaded walking condition on lower extremity coordination among 10 male children (aged 8-17 years) on the autism spectrum. All participants completed 15 gait trials in the following three conditions: (a) unloaded, (b) wearing a backpack weighted with 15% body mass, and (c) wearing a vest weighted with 15% body mass. We used continuous relative phase analysis to quantify lower extremity coordination and analyzed data through both group and single-subject comparisons. We used the Model Statistic to test for statistical significance at each of the normalized data points for each segment couple (thigh-leg, leg-foot, and thigh-foot). The first 10 and last 10 stride blocks were tested for possible accommodation strategies. Group comparisons revealed no coordination changes among the three conditions (likely due to insufficient statistical power), while single-subject comparisons exposed significant decreased variability in gait coordination patterns (p < .05) in both loaded conditions, relative to the unloaded condition. These participants exhibited variable coordination patterns during the unloaded gait. When walking with loads, coordination pattern variability of the lower extremities was decreased. This finding suggests that walking while carrying or wearing heavy objects may reduce the number of potential motor pattern choices and thus decrease the overall variability of lower extremity movement patterns. Additional research with a larger and more diverse participant sample is required to confirm this conclusion.

Database: Medline

**Trace element levels are associated with neuroinflammatory markers in children with autistic spectrum disorder.**
behaviors were -hanced. These initial -hanced behaviors for all patients with ASD who were treated with clozapine from 2011 to 2017. Disruptive be -havioral difficulties with regulating emotion and behavior, which had a significant, negative impact on their live -time. These behaviors represent a -restrictive challenges, including sensory differences and -related challenges, including sensory differences and difficulties with regulating emotion and behavior, which had a significant, negative impact on their lives. These initial findings call for systematic research on the potential causes, correlates and consequences of menstrual -long term. Although menarche and menstruation are perceived to be overwhelmingly negative events for disabled women, women's health issues remain under-researched in autism. Here, we conducted a preliminary investigation of the experiences of post-menarcheal autistic (n = 123) and non-autistic (n = 114) respondents to a brief online survey. Although autistic respondents reported many overlapping issues and experiences with non-autistic respondents, they also highlighted distinct-and sometimes-distressing-issues relating to menstruation, especially a cyclical amplification of autistic-related challenges, including sensory differences and difficulties with regulating emotion and behavior, which had a significant, negative impact on their lives. These initial findings call for systematic research on the potential causes, correlates and consequences of menstrual-related problems in autistic individuals-across the spectrum and the lifespan.

"Life is Much More Difficult to Manage During Periods": Autistic Experiences of Menstruation.

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"Life is Much More Difficult to Manage During Periods": Autistic Experiences of Menstruation.


Presentation and Correlates of Hoarding Behaviors in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Author(s): Williams, Zachary J; Failla, Michelle D; Gotham, Katherine O; Woynaroski, Tiffany G; Cascio, Carissa

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4231-4249

Abstract: This study evaluated the effectiveness of Bedtime Fading with Response Cost (BFRC) in decreasing sleep disturbances in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) using parents as change agents by implementing treatment in the home environment. A non-concurrent multiple baseline design across three participants was used. Results indicate that BFRC was effective in eliminating unwanted co-sleeping, frequent night awakenings, and dependent sleep onset. Secondary improvements include reducing sleep onset latency, bedtime resistance, and disruptive sleep-related behaviors. Follow-up data demonstrate gains were maintained. Parents reported high satisfaction with BFRC and sleep outcomes for their children. This study extends both the practice and science of parent-implemented behavioral interventions as treatment options for children with ASD and co-occurring sleep disturbances.

Database: Medline

Psychometric Evaluation of the Short Sensory Profile in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Author(s): Williams, Zachary J; Failla, Michelle D; Gotham, Katherine O; Woynaroski, Tiffany G; Cascio, Carissa

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4231-4249

Abstract: The Short Sensory Profile (SSP) is one of the most commonly used measures of sensory features in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but psychometric studies in this population are limited. Using confirmatory factor analysis, we evaluated the structural validity of the SSP subscales in ASD children. Confirmatory factor models exhibited poor fit, and a follow-up exploratory factor analysis suggested a 9-factor structure that only replicated three of the seven original subscales. Secondary analyses suggest that while reliable, the SSP total score is substantially biased by individual differences on dimensions other than the general factor. Overall, our findings discourage the use of the SSP total score and most subscale scores in children with ASD. Implications for future research are discussed.

Database: Medline

Expanding the Capacity of Primary Care to Treat Co-morbidities in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Author(s): Van Cleave, Jeanne; Holifield, Chloe; Neumeyer, Ann M; Perrin, James M; Powers, Erin; Van, Linda; Kuhlthau, Karen A

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4222-4230

Abstract: We examined barriers and facilitators to expanding primary care’s capacity to manage conditions associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). We conducted semi-structured interviews with specialists, primary care providers (PCPs), primary care staff, and parents of children with ASD, discussing health/behavior problems encountered, co-management, and patient/family experience. Participants endorsed primary care as the right place for ASD-associated conditions. Specialists advising PCPs, in lieu of referrals, efficiently uses their expertise. PCPs’ ability to manage ASD-associated conditions hinged on how behavioral aspects of ASD affected care delivery. Practices lacked ASD-specific policies but made individual-level accommodations and broader improvements benefiting children with ASD. Enhancing access to specialty expertise, particularly around ASD-associated behaviors, and building on current quality improvements appear important to expanding primary care.

Database: Medline

Exploratory Study of Executive Function Abilities Across the Adult Lifespan in Individuals Receiving an ASD Diagnosis in Adulthood.

Author(s): Abbott, Patricia; Happé, Francesca G; Charlton, Rebecca A

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4193-4206

Abstract: Little is known about cognition in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) across adulthood. We examined executive function abilities and autism traits in 134 adults receiving a first diagnosis of ASD. Participants aged 18-75 years with abilities in the normal range were assessed on executive function and self-report autism traits. Results suggest that for some abilities relying on speed and sequencing (Trail A and B; Digit Symbol), late-diagnosed individuals with ASD may demonstrate better performance than typical age-norms. On other executive measures (Digit Span, Hayling and Brixton tests) age-related correlations were similar to typical age-norms. Different domains of executive function may demonstrate different trajectories for ageing with ASD, with patterns of slower, accelerated or equivalent age-related change being observed across different measures.

Database: Medline

Presentation and Correlates of Hoarding Behaviors in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Comorbid Anxiety or Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms.

Author(s): La Buissonnière-Ariza, Valérie; Wood, Jeffrey J; Kendall, Philip C; McBride, Nicole M; Cepeda, Sandra L; Small, Brent J; Lewin, Adam B; Kerns, Connor; Storch, Eric A

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4167-4178

Abstract: We investigated the presentation and correlates of hoarding behaviors in 204 children aged 7-13 with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and comorbid anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) symptoms. Approximately 34% of the sample presented at least moderate levels, and with 7% presenting severe to extreme levels of hoarding. Child gender predicted hoarding severity. In addition, child ASD-related social difficulties together
with attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder symptom severity positively predicted hoarding controlling for child gender and restricted and repetitive behaviors. Finally, child anxiety/OCD symptoms positively predicted hoarding, controlling for all other factors. These results suggest hoarding behaviors may constitute a common feature of pediatric ASD with comorbid anxiety/OCD, particularly in girls and children with greater social difficulties and comorbid psychiatric symptom severity.

**Database:** Medline

**Abstract:** An Investigation of Gelotophobia in Individuals with a Diagnosis of High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder.

**Author(s):** Leader, Geraldine; Grennan, Susan; Chen, June L; Mannion, Arlene

**Source:** *Journal of autism and developmental disorders;* Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4155-4166

**Abstract:** Samson et al. (Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders 41:475-483, 2011) conducted the first empirical investigation examining the fear of being laughed at (gelotophobia) and its prevalence in individuals with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (hfASD). The present research examined gelotophobia in relation to social functioning, perceived social support, life satisfaction and quality of life (QoL) in individuals with hfASD, including past experiences of bullying and the presence of comorbid psychopathology. Participants were 103 adults with a clinical diagnosis of hfASD and 137 typically developing controls. Individuals with hfASD presented with higher rates of gelotophobia symptomatology in comparison to controls (87.4 vs. 22.6% respectively). It was also found that social functioning, past experiences of bullying, anxiety and life satisfaction were predictors of gelotophobia amongst individuals with hfASD.

**Database:** Medline

**Emotional Processing in Autism Spectrum Disorders: Effects of Age, Emotional Valence, and Social Engagement on Emotional Language Use.**

**Author(s):** Teh, Elizabeth J; Yap, Melvin J; Rickard Liow, Susan J

**Source:** *Journal of autism and developmental disorders;* Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4138-4154

**Abstract:** Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) show deficits in reporting others’ emotions (Lartseva et al. in Front Hum Neurosci 8:991, 2015) and in deriving meaning in social contexts (Klin et al. in Handbook of autism and pervasive developmental disorders, Wiley, Hoboken, 2005). However, researchers often use stimuli that conflate salient emotional and social information. Using a matched-pairs design, the impact of emotional and social information on emotional language in pre-school and school-age children, with and without ASD, was assessed with a picture description task comprising rated stimuli from the Pictures with Social Contexts and Emotional Scenes database (Teh et al. in Behav Res Methods, https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-017-0947-x , 2017). Results showed both groups with ASD produced fewer emotional terms than typically developing children, but the effects were moderated by valuation, social engagement, and age. Implications for theory and clinical practice are discussed.

**Database:** Medline

**Social Interactions Between 24-Month-Old Children and Their Older Sibling with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Characteristics and Association with Social-Communicative Development.**

**Author(s):** Bontinck, Chloë; Warreyen, Petra; Demurie, Ellen; Bruyneel, Eva; Boterberg, Sofie; Roeyers, Herbert

**Source:** *Journal of autism and developmental disorders;* Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4118-4137

**Abstract:** This study compared sibling interactions between 24-month-old children and their older sibling with ASD (high-risk; n = 24) with 24-month-old children and their typically developing older sibling (low-risk; n = 32). First, high-risk sibling pairs showed lower levels of positive behaviour and younger siblings of children with ASD imitated their older sibling less. Second, in the high-risk group positive interactions were positively associated with the youngest child's language abilities. However, this association was no longer significant after controlling for language abilities at 14 months. Third, more total interactions in the high-risk group, both negative and positive, were associated with more ASD characteristics. Thus, early sibling interactions might reveal interesting information in light of the (atypical) developmental trajectories of younger siblings of children with ASD.

**Database:** Medline

**Adult Siblings Who Have a Brother or Sister with Autism: Between-Family and Within-Family Variations in Sibling Relationships.**

**Author(s):** Orsmond, Gael I; Fulford, Daniel

**Source:** *Journal of autism and developmental disorders;* Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4090-4102

**Abstract:** Prior research on the sibling relationship in the context of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has included only one sibling per family. We used multi-level modeling to examine aspects of the sibling relationship in 207 adults who have a brother or sister with ASD from 125 families, investigating variability in sibling relationship quality and pessimism within and between families. We found that there was greater variability in aspects of the sibling relationship with the brother or sister with ASD within families than between families. Sibling individual-level factors were associated with positive affect in the sibling relationship, while family-level factors were associated with the sibling's pessimism about their brother or sister's future. The findings illustrate the unique experiences of siblings within families.
Abstract: Youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are psychiatrically hospitalized at high rates. Though specialized psychiatric units are effective, few specialized units exist. The ASD Care Pathway (ASD-CP) was developed as a scalable approach to improving care in general psychiatric units through staff training and a package of autism-specific intervention strategies. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the ASD-CP in a public hospital child psychiatric service compared 18 months (n = 17) versus 18 months (n = 20) post implementation. Average length of hospital stay decreased 40% (22.4-13.4 days) and use of crisis interventions decreased 77% (holds/restraints; 0.65/day to 0.15/day), though each result only approached statistical significance (p = 0.07; 0.057). This study provides preliminary evidence for improved outcomes after implementation of an ASD-CP.

Database: Medline

Double Helix Rainbow Kids.

Author(s): Ehrensaft, Diane

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4079-4081

Abstract: Double Helix Rainbow Kids is a letter to the editor in conjunction with the forthcoming issue on autism and gender that discusses the intersection between autism and gender expansiveness, calling on extant research, clinical observations at the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Child and Adolescent Gender Center and other clinics, as well as personal narratives. It alerts the reader to the importance of giving full attention to the gender stress or gender dysphoria that often accompanies autism spectrum in children, making constitutional-psychological-social links between neurodiversity and gender diversity.

Database: Medline

Brief Report: Gender Identity Differences in Autistic Adults: Associations with Perceptual and Socio-cognitive Profiles.

Author(s): Walsh, Reubs J; Krabbendam, Lydia; Dewinter, Jeroen; Begeer, Sander

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4070-4078

Abstract: Prior research has shown an elevation in autism traits and diagnoses in individuals seen for gender related consultation and in participants self-identifying as transgender. To investigate this relationship between autism and gender identity from a new angle, we compared the self-reported autism traits and sensory differences between participants with autism who did or did not identify with their assigned sex (i.e. cisgender or trans and non-binary, respectively). We found broad elevation of most cognitive autism traits in the trans and non-binary group (those who identified with a gender other than their assigned gender), and lower visual and auditory hypersensitivity. We contrast these data to existing hypotheses and propose a role for autistic resistance to social conditioning.

Database: Medline

Brief Report: Sex Differences in Parental Concerns for Toddlers with Autism Risk.

Author(s): Ramsey, Riane K; Nichols, Lashae; Ludwig, Natasha N; Fein, Deborah; Adamson, Lauren B; Robins, Diana L

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4063-4069

Abstract: Research on sex differences in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) suggests both higher prevalence and a more easily observable presentation of core ASD symptomology in males, which may lead to sex differences in parental concerns. The current study examined whether sex and diagnosis relate to the timing, number, and types of pre-diagnosis concerns for 669 (Nmale = 468) toddlers who screened at risk for ASD. No sex differences in parents' concerns emerged for toddlers diagnosed with ASD; however, in the overall at-risk sample, parents of boys endorsed ASD symptoms, including restricted and repetitive behaviors, more than parents of girls. Future research should examine why sex differences in pre-diagnosis concerns emerge and how they might impact early diagnosis for at-risk boys versus girls.

Database: Medline

"They Thought It Was an Obsession": Trajectories and Perspectives of Autistic Transgender and Gender-Diverse Adolescents.

Author(s): Strang, John F; Powers, Meredith D; Knauss, Megan; Sibarium, Ely; Leibowitz, Scott F; Kenworthy, Lauren; Sadikova, Eleonora; Wyss, Shannon; Willing, Laura; Caplan, Reid; Pervez, Noor; Nowak, Joel; Gohari, Dena; Gomez-Lobo, Veronica; Call, David; Anthony, Laura G

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4039-4055
Abstract: Despite research exploring autism in gender-diverse adolescents, no studies have elicited these individuals’ perspectives. In-depth interviews with 22 well-characterized autistic gender-diverse adolescents revealed critical themes, including: recollections of pre-pubertal gender nonconformity; vivid experiences of gender dysphoria; a fear of social gender expression due to perceived animosity toward transgender people; and specific challenges that result from the interplay of gender diversity and neurodiversity. During the ~22 month study social gender affirmation increased in six participants and gender dysphoria attenuated in four participants. Given the ethical imperative to understand and prioritize the voiced perspectives and needs of autistic gender minority adolescents as well as the discovery of shared themes and experiences in this population, results should inform clinical research approaches and priorities.

Database: Medline

Gender Dysphoria, Sexuality and Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Systematic Map Review.

Author(s): Øien, Roald A; Cichetti, Domenic V; Nordahl-Hansen, Anders

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4028-4037

Abstract: In this systematic map review, we aimed (1) at identifying studies including the co-occurrence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and gender dysphoria (GD) between 1946 and 2018, and (2) to present the papers included in this systematic map review to provide authors in the field of GD, sexuality and ASD with an important database of studies focusing on this very complex topic. The field is of emerging interest, as observed by the large increase of studies over the past decades, especially since 2015. However, future challenges are to be addressed in future studies.

Database: Medline

Utilitarian Attention by Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder on a Filtering Task.

Author(s): Brodeur, Darlene A; Stewart, Jillian; Dawkins, Tamara; Burack, Jacob A

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4019-4027

Abstract: The findings are evidence that persons with ASD benefit more than typically developing (TD) persons from spatial framing cues in focusing their attention on a visual target. Participants were administered a forced-choice task to assess visual filtering. A target stimulus was presented on a screen and flanker stimuli were presented simultaneously or with or after the target, with varying stimuli onset asynchronies (SOAs). Regardless of SOA, TD children showed the expected distracting effects with slower reaction times (RTs) when flankers were at closer distances from the target. However, children with ASD displayed shorter RTs in the conditions in which the stimuli were presented simultaneously or with a short SOA. These findings are interpreted as reflecting utilitarian attention among children with ASD.

Database: Medline

Understanding Friendship Sex Heterophily and Relational Characteristics to Optimize the Selection of Peer Models for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Author(s): Locke, Jill; Anderson, Ariana; Frederick, Lindsay; Kasari, Connie

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 4010-4018

Abstract: This study used social network analysis to evaluate whether sex heterophily, the degree to which peers are different in sex, between 126 children with autism (ages 5-12 years) and their peers affected social network connectivity. Results indicate that: (1) the quantity and sex of friends were more important in predicting social network connectivity than the relational characteristics of the friends (friendship nominations and social network salience/popularity); and (2) sex heterophily is an important factor in predicting social network connectivity. For males with autism, having friends of the same sex was associated with better social network connectivity; this was not true for females with autism. These findings have important implications for the selection of peer models for elementary-aged children with autism.

Database: Medline

Gender Identity in Autism: Sex Differences in Social Affiliation with Gender Groups.

Author(s): Cooper, Kate; Smith, Laura G E; Russell, Ailsa J

Source: Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 3995-4006

Available at Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders - from Unpaywall

Abstract: High rates of gender variance have been reported in autistic people, with higher variance in autistic females than males. The social component of gender identity may be affected, with autistic females experiencing lower identification with and feeling less positively about their gender groups than controls. We measured gender identification, gender self-esteem, and aspects of gender expression (masculinity and femininity) in autistic natal males and females, and controls (N = 486). We found that autistic people had lower gender identification and gender self-esteem than controls, and autistic natal females had lower gender identification than autistic natal males and natal female controls. In conclusion, autistic people, particularly natal females, had lower social identification with and more negative feelings about a gender group.

Database: Medline
Autistic Traits in Treatment-Seeking Transgender Adults.

**Author(s):** Nobili, Anna; Glazebrook, Cris; Bouman, Walter Pierre; Glidden, Derek; Baron-Cohen, Simon; Allison, Carrie; Smith, Paula; Arcelus, Jon

**Source:** Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 3984-3994

Available at Journal of autism and developmental disorders - from Unpaywall

**Abstract:** The present study aimed to compare prevalence of autistic traits measured by the self-reported autism spectrum quotient-short (AQ-short) in a transgender clinical population (n = 656) matched by age and sex assigned at birth to a cisgender community sample. Results showed that transgender and cisgender people reported similar levels of possible autistic caseness. Transgender people assigned female were more likely to have clinically significant autistic traits compared to any other group. No difference was found between those assigned male. High AQ scores may not be indicative of the presence of an autism spectrum condition as the difference between groups mainly related to social behaviours; such scores may be a reflection of transgender people's high social anxiety levels due to negative past experiences.

**Database:** Medline

**Broad Autism Phenotypic Traits and the Relationship to Sexual Orientation and Sexual Behavior.**

**Author(s):** Qualls, Lydia R; Hartmann, Kathrin; Paulson, James F

**Source:** Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 48 (no. 12); p. 3974-3983

Available at Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders - from Unpaywall

**Abstract:** Individuals with higher levels of the broad autism phenotype (BAP) have some symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Like individuals with ASD, people with higher-BAP may have fewer sexual experiences and may experience more same-sex attraction. This study measured BAP traits, sexual experiences, and sexual orientation in typically developing (TD) individuals to see if patterns of sexual behavior and sexual orientation in high-BAP resemble those in ASD. Although BAP characteristics did not predict sexual experiences, one BAP measure significantly predicted sexual orientation, β = 0.22, t = 2.72, p = .007, controlling for demographic variables (R2 change = .04, F = 7.41, p = .007), showing individuals with higher-BAP also reported increased same-sex attraction. This finding supports the hypothesis that individuals with higher-BAP resemble ASD individuals in being more likely than TD individuals to experience same-sex attraction.

**Database:** Medline

**Attentional Mechanisms in Autism, ADHD, and Autism-ADHD Using a Local-Global Paradigm.**

**Author(s):** Gargaro, B A; May, Tamara; Tonge, B J; Sheppard, D M; Bradshaw, J L; Rinehart, N J

**Source:** Journal of attention disorders; Dec 2018; vol. 22 (no. 14); p. 1320-1332

**Abstract:** OBJECTIVE Cognitive flexibility or attentional set-shifting capacity has long been considered a core area of executive dysfunction for individuals with autism. Whether these difficulties are due to higher-level attentional difficulties associated with comorbid ADHD remains unclear. METHOD The current study compared the performance of 48 participants with autism, ADHD, autism-ADHD, and a comparison group (N = 12 per group) on a set-shifting task, which included a local-global paradigm. RESULTS Results of this study revealed that participants with attentional difficulties (autism + ADHD and ADHD alone) exhibited a significant shifting cost (difference between maintaining and shifting attention). CONCLUSION Attentional difficulties associated with ADHD may be associated with an enhanced attentional shifting cost. Implications of these results were discussed in relation to screening for ADHD symptoms in studies of individuals with autism which seek to determine the neuropsychological profile of this condition.

**Database:** Medline

**Dioxins as potential risk factors for autism spectrum disorder.**

**Author(s):** Guo, Zhiling; Xie, Heidi Quanhui; Zhang, Peng; Luo, Yali; Xu, Tuan; Liu, Yiyun; Fu, Hualing; Xu, Li; Valsami-Jones, Eugenia; Boksa, Patricia; Zhao, Bin

**Source:** Environment international; Dec 2018; vol. 121 ; p. 906-915

**Abstract:** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has emerged as a major public health concern due to its fast-growing prevalence in recent decades. Environmental factors are thought to contribute substantially to the variance in ASD. Interest in environmental toxins as causes of ASD has arisen due to the high sensitivity of the developing human brain to toxic chemicals, particularly to dioxin and certain dioxin-like compounds (dioxins). As a group of typical persistent organic pollutants, dioxins have been found to exert adverse effects on human brain development. In this paper, we review the evidence for association of exposure to dioxins with neurodevelopmental abnormalities related to ASD based on both human epidemiological and animal studies. It has been documented that exposure to dioxins during critical developmental periods increased risk for ASD. This notion has been demonstrated in different populations exposed to high or background level of dioxins. Furthermore, the effects and mechanisms of action of dioxins relevant to the pathophysiology and pathogenesis of ASD are summarized, describing potential underlying mechanisms linking dioxin exposure with ASD onset. Further studies focusing on effects of prenatal/perinatal exposure to individual dioxin congeners or to mixtures of dioxins on ASD-associated behavioral and neurobiological consequences in animal...
models, and on the mechanisms of actions of dioxins, are needed in order to better understand how dioxin exposure might contribute to increased risk for ASD.

**Database:** Medline

**Temperament and character in men with autism spectrum disorder: A reanalysis of scores on the Temperament and Character Inventory by individual case matching.**

**Author(s):** Vuijk, Richard; de Nijs, Pieter F A; Deen, Mathijs; Vitale, Salvatore; Simons-Sprong, Mirjam; Hengeveld, Michiel W

**Source:** Contemporary clinical trials communications; Dec 2018; vol. 12 ; p. 55-59

**Abstract:** Background Interest in autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in adulthood is increasing. Although a person may be diagnosed with ASD, the diagnosis reveals little about the individual's temperament, character, and personality. Also, relatively little is known about the personality of adults with ASD. Method A reanalysis of scores on the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) administered to a group of 66 normally intelligent men aged 18-63 years, diagnosed with ASD, by individual case matching to a comparison group of 66 men from the general population drawn from the TCI manual. Results Compared to the comparison group, men with ASD scored significantly higher on the scale for Harm Avoidance, and lower on Novelty Seeking, Reward Dependence, Self-Directedness, and Cooperativeness. Conclusions In this study the score pattern for temperament and character found in men with ASD by individual case matching confirms and strengthens earlier general group matching findings emerging from our 2012 study and from studies from Sweden and the Netherlands.

**Database:** Medline

**Parental Perception and Participation in Genetic Testing Among Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders.**

**Author(s):** Harrington, John W; Emuren, Leonard; Restaino, Kathryrn; Schrier Vergano, Samantha

**Source:** Clinical pediatrics; Dec 2018; vol. 57 (no. 14); p. 1642-1655

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to determine the factors associated with genetic testing in children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and understand parental involvement in the decision to test using survey data of parents of children with ASD. Evaluation by a geneticist was associated with genetic testing by more than 39 times compared to evaluation by a nongeneticist (95% CI = 1.66-168.81). Those offered testing by the physicians were more than 6 times more likely to be tested than those not offered testing (95% CI = 1.66-24.61). Financial concerns, not being offered testing, and lack of awareness were the most consistent reasons for not testing given by participants. A physician’s recommendation for testing and an evaluation by a geneticist were the most important factors associated with genetic testing in children with ASD. Educating primary care physicians and nongenetic specialists can potentially improve genetic testing among children with ASD.

**Database:** Medline

**Social Conformity in Autism.**

**Author(s):** Lazzaro, Stephanie C; Weidinger, Laura; Cooper, Rose A; Baron-Cohen, Simon; Moutsiana, Christina; Sharot, Tali

**Source:** Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Humans are extremely susceptible to social influence. Here, we examine whether this susceptibility is altered in autism, a condition characterized by social difficulties. Autistic participants (N = 22) and neurotypical controls (N = 22) completed a memory test of previously seen words and were then exposed to answers supposedly given by four other individuals. Autistic individuals and controls were as likely to alter their judgements to align with inaccurate responses of group members. These changes reflected both temporary judgement changes (public conformity) and long-lasting memory changes (private conformity). Both groups were more susceptible to answers believed to be from other humans than from computer algorithms. Our results suggest that autistic individuals and controls are equally susceptible to social influence when reporting their memories.

**Database:** Medline

**Prevalence and Predictors of Anxiety Disorders in Adolescent and Adult Males with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Fragile X Syndrome.**

**Author(s):** Ezell, Jordan; Hogan, Abigail; Fairchild, Amanda; Hills, Kimberly; Klusek, Jessica; Abbeduto, Leonard; Roberts, Jane

**Source:** Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Anxiety disorders affect ~15-20% of youths without neurodevelopmental disorders, with persons having autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and fragile X syndrome (FXS) at elevated risk for anxiety disorders. Few studies have compared rates and predictors of anxiety disorders in adolescents with FXS or ASD. This study directly compares rates, predictors, and medication of anxiety disorders between age-matched, male adolescents with FXS (n = 31) or ASD (n = 20). Results indicate that 51.6% of FXS and 50.0% of ASD adolescents met criteria for an anxiety disorder. Cognitive scores and ASD severity did not predict anxiety. Of those with anxiety, ~40% of the FXS and 20% of the ASD participants were prescribed medications for anxiety.
**Digital Books with Dynamic Text and Speech Output: Effects on Sight Word Reading for Preschoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorder.**

**Author(s):** Mandak, Kelsey; Light, Janice; McNaughton, David

**Source:** Journal of autism and developmental disorders; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Despite the importance of literacy in today's educational curriculum, learning to read is a challenge for many children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). One of the foundational skills of early literacy learning is the ability to recognize sight words. This study used a single-subject, multiple-probe, across-participants design, to investigate the effects of a new software feature, dynamic text and speech output, on the acquisition of sight words by three pre-literate preschoolers with ASD during shared digital book reading experiences. All participants demonstrated successful acquisition of the target sight words with minimal exposure to the words. Limitations and future research directions are discussed, including the importance of investigating how the new software feature can be integrated into a more comprehensive literacy curriculum.

**Database:** Medline

**Clinical correlates of sluggish cognitive tempo in adolescents with autism spectrum disorder.**

**Author(s):** Duncan, Amie; Tamm, Leanne; Birnschein, Allison M; Becker, Stephen P

**Source:** Autism : the international journal of research and practice; Nov 2018 ; p. 1362361318811329

Available at [Autism : the international journal of research and practice](https://doi.org/10.1002/aut.12345) - from SAGE A - Z Sign in with OpenAthens details


**Abstract:** Adolescents with autism spectrum disorder frequently experience social communication difficulties, executive functioning deficits, and anxiety and depressive symptoms, which are similar to the symptoms and correlates of sluggish cognitive tempo. Although sluggish cognitive tempo is related to, but distinct from, the inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder that commonly co-occur with autism spectrum disorder, few studies have examined sluggish cognitive tempo in autism spectrum disorder. We examined whether sluggish cognitive tempo and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder were differentially associated with autism symptomatology, daily life executive functioning, and internalizing and externalizing symptoms in 51 adolescents (ages 13-18 years) with autism spectrum disorder without intellectual disability. Regression analyses controlling for age and IQ showed that sluggish cognitive tempo symptoms, but not attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms, were associated with increased autism symptomatology and internalizing symptoms. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms, but not sluggish cognitive tempo symptoms, were associated with increased externalizing behaviors and behavior regulation deficits. Both sluggish cognitive tempo and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder were independently associated with increased metacognitive deficits. This study provides preliminary evidence that sluggish cognitive tempo symptoms are elevated in autism spectrum disorder and associated with key clinical correlates, with implications for the assessment and treatment in adolescents with autism spectrum disorder.

**Database:** Medline

**Next-Generation Sequencing in Autism Spectrum Disorder.**

**Author(s):** Sanders, Stephan J

**Source:** Cold Spring Harbor perspectives in medicine; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a common disorder that causes substantial distress. Heritability studies consistently show a strong genetic contribution, raising the hope that identifying ASD-associated genetic variants will offer insights into neurobiology and ultimately therapeutics. Next-generation sequencing (NGS) enabled the identification of disruptive variants throughout protein-coding regions of the genome. Alongside large cohorts and novel statistical methods, these NGS methods revolutionized ASD gene discovery. NGS methods have also contributed substantially to functional genetic data, such as gene expression, used to understand the neurobiological consequences of disrupting these ASD-associated genes. These functional data are also critical for annotating the noncoding genome as whole-genome sequencing (WGS) begins to provide initial insights outside of protein-coding regions. NGS methods still have a major role to play, as do similarly transformative advances in stem cell and gene-editing methods, in translating genetic discoveries into a first generation of ASD therapeutics.

**Database:** Medline

**Neural Correlates of Social Perception in Children with Autism: Local versus Global Preferences.**

**Author(s):** Herringshaw, Abbey J; Kumar, Sandhya L; Noel Rody, Kaitlyn; Kana, Rajesh K

**Source:** Neuroscience; Nov 2018

**Abstract:** The Weak Central Coherence account of autism spectrum disorders posits that individuals with ASD utilize a detail-oriented information processing bias. While this local bias is helpful in visual search tasks, ASD individuals falter in social cognition tasks where coherence is advantageous. The present study examined the neural correlates of Weak Central Coherence in ASD during visual and social processing. Fifteen ASD and sixteen typically developing children/adolescents completed a social/visual information processing task in an fMRI scanner. The stimuli consisted
of human characters, composed of geometrical shapes, displaying different emotions. In the locally-oriented Shape condition, participants indicated whether a given shape was present in a figure. In the Emotion condition, participants identified the emotion conveyed by the character in the figure at the global-level. Whole-brain within-and-between-group activation and seed-to-voxel functional connectivity analyses were conducted in SPM12 and the CONN toolbox. The ASD group was significantly faster in shape identification, but less accurate in emotion identification. The TD group showed significantly increased areas of activity over the ASD group in the Shape task in regions associated with executive control, such as the medial prefrontal cortex and middle frontal gyrus, suggesting increased interference from the global/social information. During the Emotion condition, the ASD group showed decreased connectivity between frontal and posterior regions and between body perception and motor networks, suggesting a possible difference in mirroring. The findings suggest that social cognitive factors, not visual processing biases, underlie the observed behavioral differences.

Database: Medline


Author(s): Martin, Gary E; Bush, Lauren; Klusek, Jessica; Patel, Shivani; Losh, Molly
Source: Journal of speech, language, and hearing research : JSLHR; Nov 2018 ; p. 1-15
Available at Journal of speech, language, and hearing research : JSLHR - from EBSCO (MEDLINE Complete)

Abstract: Purpose Pragmatic language skills are often impaired above and beyond general language delays in individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities. This study used a multimethod approach to language sample analysis to characterize syndrome- and sex-specific profiles across different neurodevelopmental disabilities and to examine the congruency of 2 analysis techniques. Method Pragmatic skills of young males and females with fragile X syndrome with autism spectrum disorder (FXS-ASD, n = 61) and without autism spectrum disorder (FXS-O, n = 40), Down syndrome (DS, n = 42), and typical development (TD, n = 37) and males with idiopathic autism spectrum disorder only (ASD-O, n = 29) were compared using variables obtained from a detailed hand-coding system contrasted with similar variables obtained automatically from the language analysis program Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT).Results Noncontingent language and perseveration were characteristic of the pragmatic profiles of boys and girls with FXS-ASD and boys with ASD-O. Boys with ASD-O also initiated turns less often and were more nonresponsive than other groups, and girls with FXS-ASD were more nonresponsive than their male counterparts. Hand-coding and SALT methods were largely convergent with some exceptions. Conclusion Results suggest both similarities and differences in the pragmatic profiles observed across different neurodevelopmental disabilities, including idiopathic and FXS-associated cases of ASD, as well as an important sex difference in FXS-ASD. These findings and congruency between the 2 language sample analysis techniques together have important implications for assessment and intervention efforts.

Database: Medline

Social Anhedonia in Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Psychiatry Referrals.

Author(s): Gadow, Kenneth D; Garman, Heather D

Abstract: Social anhedonia (SA) is a widely accepted symptom phenotype in autism spectrum disorder (ASD), depression, and schizophrenia spectrum disorder; nevertheless, its clinical implications are relatively unstudied in populations of clinic-referred youth with and without ASD. Youth with ASD (n = 268) and nonASD psychiatry referrals (n = 641) between 6 and 18 years of age were evaluated for SA, ASD severity, co-occurring psychiatric symptom severity, and a wide range of common clinical correlates. Participants were parsed into youth with and without parent-defined SA, and the latter were further subdivided into youth with (SA+ alone) and without (SA/-alone) a preference for being alone. Two thirds of the ASD group met criteria for SA compared with one fourth of psychiatry referrals. SA was associated with higher rates of ASD social skill deficits, social anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia symptoms in both clinic samples. SA+ alone had the highest rates of social anxiety. Among the ASD sample, severity of social anxiety and ASD social skills deficits were relatively small predictors of SA. There was little evidence of divergence between youth with and without SA for a wide range of commonly studied biopsychosocial clinical correlates, for example, youth, family, medical, and treatment characteristics. Although factors associated with the ASD diathesis contribute to an increased risk of SA, they do not in and of themselves explain our results. Lack of syndrome specificity supports the notion that SA is a useful transdiagnostic symptom phenotype in referred youth and challenges traditional conceptualizations of ASD as a categorical clinical phenotype.

Database: Medline

The games they play: Observations of children with autism spectrum disorder on the school playground.

Author(s): Gilmore, Sean; Frederick, Lindsay K; Santillan, Lupita; Locke, Jill
Source: Autism : the international journal of research and practice; Nov 2018 ; p. 1362361318811987
Abstract: The playground may be an important context to examine the social functioning of children with autism spectrum disorder. Previous literature on playground peer engagement has used quantitative methods, but there is limited research using qualitative observations to understand the nuances of playground behavior. Using a mixed-methods approach, 55 elementary school-aged children with autism spectrum disorder who are primarily included in general education settings were observed on the school playground using the Playground Observation of Peer Engagement. Quantitative and qualitative data were examined using a mixed-methods approach. The results showed that children with autism spectrum disorder: engage in solitary and peripheral activities; demonstrate appropriate initiations and responses to peers; display self-stimulatory, motoric behaviors most frequently during solitary activities; and often have neutral affect on the playground. These findings suggest that intervention and supports for children with autism spectrum disorder may be important to deliver at recess to address peer engagement.

Database: Medline

Syllogistic reasoning reveals reduced bias in people with higher autistic-like traits from the general population.

Author(s): Lewton, Marcus; Ashwin, Chris; Brosnan, Mark

Source: Autism: the international journal of research and practice; Nov 2018; p. 1362361318808779

Abstract: Recent theories of autism have emphasised the cognitive strengths and weaknesses in those with autism, which are also seen to some degree in non-clinical samples with higher autistic-like traits. The dual process theory of autism proposes that people with autism and non-clinical people with a higher degree of autistic-like traits have a propensity to show reduced intuitive processing (automatic and typically faster) alongside enhanced propensity towards deliberative processing (dependent on general cognitive ability and typically slower). This study aimed to further test the dual process theory of autism by investigating syllogistic reasoning (whether a conclusion can be logically deducted from two propositions) in addition to the cognitive reflection test (correct responses to which reflect deliberative processing over-riding intuitive processing) with respect to the degree of autistic-like traits and general cognitive ability in a non-clinical sample of 189 adults. Results showed that higher levels of autistic-like traits were related to lower levels of intuitive processing and higher levels of deliberative processing, which was found across both the syllogistic reasoning and cognitive reflection test measures - over and above the effect of general cognitive ability. The findings are consistent with the dual process theory of autism, and implications for autism are discussed.

Database: Medline


Author(s): Dababnah, Sarah; Habayeb, Serene; Bear, Benjamin J; Hussein, Dana

Source: Autism: the international journal of research and practice; Nov 2018; p. 1362361318805368

Abstract: Although the number of Syrians affected by the civil war rises, little work has been done to address the needs of Syrian refugee children with autism spectrum disorder. This research aimed to test the feasibility and acceptability of a culturally sensitive intervention developed specifically for children with autism spectrum disorder affected by trauma. Local partners advised the program team on cultural norms. Nine parents and 11 teachers were recruited to participate in 12-week parent-teacher cooperatives in a large Turkish city. We used qualitative methods to analyze interviews with each participant after intervention completion. A total of 14 participants completed the program (70%). All interviewees were women and Syrian refugees. Local political events, transportation costs and safety, and illnesses impacted attrition and attendance. All participants were satisfied with program content, including gains in autism knowledge, behavior management skills, and social support. Program-related challenges included applying skills to nonverbal children. The majority of participants made recommendations for program improvement, including a need for services outside urban areas. Flexible program delivery methods, including online options, might better accommodate participants unable to travel due to distance, political unrest, or safety. More research is needed to rigorously test program outcomes and to evaluate efforts to train local program leaders.

Database: Medline

The Shape Bias in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder: Potential Sources of Individual Differences.
**Abstract:** Purpose Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) demonstrate many mechanisms of lexical acquisition that support language in typical development; however, 1 notable exception is the shape bias. The bases of these children's difficulties with the shape bias are not well understood, and the current study explored potential sources of individual differences from the perspectives of both attentional and conceptual accounts of the shape bias. Method Shape bias performance from the dataset of Potrzeba, Fein, and Naigles (2015) was analyzed, including 33 children with typical development (M = 20 months; SD = 1.6), 15 children with ASD with high verbal abilities (M = 33 months; SD = 4.6), and 14 children with ASD with low verbal abilities (M = 33 months; SD = 6.6). Lexical predictors (shape-side noun percentage from the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory; Fenson et al., 2007) and social-pragmatic predictors (joint attention duration during play sessions) were considered as predictors of subsequent shape bias performance. Results For children in the low verbal ASD group, initiation of joint attention (positively) and passive attention (negatively) predicted subsequent shape bias performance, controlling for initial language and developmental level. Proportion of child's known nouns with shape-defined properties correlated negatively with shape bias performance in the high verbal ASD group but did not reach significance in regression models. Conclusions These findings suggest that no single account sufficiently explains the observed individual differences in shape bias performance in children with ASD. Nonetheless, these findings break new ground in highlighting the role of social communicative interactions as integral to understanding specific language outcomes (i.e., the shape bias) in children with ASD, especially those with low verbal abilities, and point to new hypotheses concerning the linguistic content of these interactions. Presentation Videohttps://doi.org/10.23641/asha.7299581.
From the journal homepage, click ‘Institutional Login’, select “Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership” from the list of institutions, click “Login” then enter your Athens username and password.

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