



A NEW DYNAMIC
FOR CHANGE AND INCLUSION

12th

AUTISM-EUROPE
International
Congress 2019

www.autismeurope-congress2019.com

12th Autism-Europe International Congress

September 13-15th 2019

ABSTRACT BOOK

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We are glad to invite you to the 12th International Congress of Autism-Europe, which is organized in cooperation with Autisme France, in the beautiful city of Nice. Our congresses are held every three years, and we are delighted to be back in France, 36 years after the congress of Paris. It will be a great opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved and look at the opportunities ahead.

The 2019 congress' motto is "A new Dynamic for Change and Inclusion", in keeping with our aspiration that international scientific research on autism should be translated into concrete changes and foster social inclusion for autistic people of all ages and needs. Our congresses therefore strive to be a place where all interested stakeholders can meet to exchange and reflect on

how to shape better lives for autistic people.

On the occasion of this three-day event people from all over the world will come together to share the most recent developments across the field of autism. The congress will address a wide range of issues, including: diagnostic and assessment, language and communication, access to education, employment, research and ethics, gender and sexuality, inclusion and community living, mental and physical health, interventions, strategic planning and coordination of services as well as rights and participation.

We hope you will enjoy this Congress, where we will focus on what is needed to foster societies in which autistic people are included whatever their support needs and

have happy and fulfilling lives.

With kindest regards,



Zsuzsanna Szilvásy
President of Autism-Europe

We are very honoured to welcome the 12th Autism Europe Congress in Nice from 13 to 15 September. Our country, now determined to «put science at the heart of the public policy of autism», has many talented professionals and researchers, who are committed with us to the organization of this event, and the families are looking forward to listen to the outstanding speakers and contributors who will be bringing their skills and enthusiasm to serve the cause of autism.

Our country fully recognizes itself in the motto of the congress: «A new dynamic for change and inclusion» because the inclusive society has now become the reference for disability policy. Yet, this inclusive society is still not a daily reality for many people with autism, but initiatives are multi-

plying, and little by little, the understanding of autism changes as well as practices.

We will be particularly pleased to welcome professionals and families from all over the world to discuss the challenges, the advances, both social and scientific. Diagnoses are still difficult or too late to obtain in many countries, and it is important to share the tools to improve them, as it is essential to develop the means of real inclusion for people with autism, at school and at work, in sports and leisure activities, and also to bring support to families.

We hope that the program of this congress will attract you, and that it will be a success like the previous ones; its goal is to promote the participation of autistic people in all aspects of civic life, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Per-

sons with Disability, while respecting their differences, which we all strive to better identify and take into account.



Danièle Langloys
President of Autisme France












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Understanding of nonlinguistic expressions by young adults with autism spectrum disorder and their neurotypical controls and its connection to empathizing skills and the understanding of faux pas

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Introduction

Communicating in changing situations requires mental flexibility. In communication, intentions are conveyed through linguistic and nonlinguistic (e.g. gestures and facial expressions) means. Although it is known that understanding nonverbal means cause difficulties to individuals with ASD, there is only a few studies focusing on this topic. This study examines 1) how young adults with ASD, when compared to their neurotypical controls, interpret contextually challenging situations where intentions are conveyed using nonlinguistic expressions. It also examines 2) how the participants understand faux pas and how they assess their own empathizing skills, and 3) whether the understanding of nonlinguistic expressions, of faux pas and empathizing skills are related.

Methods

Thirty-three young adults with ASD (26 males, 8 females) and 37 neurotypical controls (26 males, 11 females), whose IQ's were within normal limits, participated in this study. Comprehension of nonlinguistic expressions was measured using a selection of items of the Assessment Battery of Communication (ABaCo). Participants also took part in the Faux Pas Recognition Test and in the Empathy Quotient (EQ) self-report questionnaire. The data was analyzed using t-test and Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

Results

As compared to the controls, young adults with ASD performed significantly weaker on the nonlinguistic comprehension tasks and the EQ questionnaire. They also had poorer performance in the Faux Pas Test but the difference did not reach significance. There was considerable variability in the performance within the ASD group in all the tasks. In both groups there was a moderate correlation between the Faux Pas test and the EQ Questionnaire but only a small correlation between the ABaCo and the Faux Pas Test, and the ABaCo and the EQ Questionnaire. In the EQ Questionnaire, in both groups females tended to assess themselves higher than males but in the ABaCo and the Faux Pas Test there were no differences between the genders.

Discussion

Young adults with ASD may still have difficulties in utilizing context when understanding non-linguistically expressed meanings. These difficulties are not strongly connected with their scores in the Faux Pas Test or in the EQ Questionnaire. Contextual comprehension demands a variety of social cognitive and neuropsychological skills. More research of the interaction of these skills is needed.

Keywords: Adult, Communication, Social