Personality style and disorders in people with autism spectrum disorder

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The Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a neurodevelopment disorder characterized by deficiencies in two principal categories, repetitive behaviors and social communication impairment (APA,2013). This disorder has shown comorbidity with other psychiatric disorders such as depression or anxiety, but also with pathological personality traits or disorders (PD) (Lugnegård, Hallerbäck y Gillberg, 2012; Dudas et al. 2017).

Objective: to explore the relation between high functioning ASD (HF-ASD) persons and PDs considering the Millon's personality framework (1997).

Method: 67 patients collaborated (middle age = 31,9 SD = 10,25) who were evaluated using the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI – III; Millon, 1997) the Autism Spectrum Disorder (AQ; Baron-Cohen et al., 2001) and the Empathy Spectrum Disorder (EQ; Baron-Cohen et al., 2004).

Hypothesis: More representative PDs in our sample will be the Schizoid, Schizotypal, Avoidant and Obsessive-compulsive disorders. Secondly borderline PD will be the personality disorder with structural impairments more prevalent in HF-ASD. Lastly avoidant, schizoid, schizotypal and compulsive disorder will correlate with a major presence of autistic traits and low empathy in HF-ASD will be associated to antisocial, sadist and schizoid PD.

Results: schizoid, avoidant, self-destructive and depressive PDs are more prevalent in this sample (see Figure 1). The AQ obtained a strong and significant positive relations with schizoid and paranoid PDs (see Figure 2). The EQ mainly correlates negatively with the schizoid and positively with dependent PDs.

Figure 2. Correlations between PDs and AQ or EQ

Conclusion: In summary, most common PDs in our sample with HF-ASD are avoidant, schizoid, self-destructive and depressive. Also, we didn't observe significant differences between heavy structural deficit personality disorders. In relation with the third hypothesis, strong positive correlation are seen between the AQ schizoid and paranoid PDs.

Figure 1. PD percentage. Blue, trait absence (TB<75). Orange, personality style (TB ≥75 to < 85). Grey, individuals with PD puntuation in the MCMI-III.

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