

Gender and Sexuality in Autism

Gender and sexuality are different things. Both gender and sexuality may be experienced differently by the autistic (AS) population when compared to the typical population (NT). In autism our brain is single focussed and not traditionally bound to being socialised in ways the NT population experiences. This has implications for gender and sexual development. To date the research on gender and sexuality in autism is scanty. But one paper concluded:

'autism manifests differently by biological sex. Furthermore, atypical brain areas in females with autism substantially and non-randomly ($P < 0.001$) overlapped with areas that were sexually dimorphic in neurotypical controls, in both grey and white matter, suggesting neural 'masculinization'. This was not seen in males with autism' (Lai Meng-Chuan, et al, 2013. P.1).

The idea that males and females experience sexuality and gender differently in autism is not new, but, what will this mean for diagnosis, individual development of sexual and gender identities as well as how to support this diverse population.

This presentation explores these issues and more.