

Using interpersonal movement coordination to investigate gender differences in adults with autism

Nida Latif

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Cynthia Di Francesco

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Aparna Nadig

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Abstract

When individuals engage in social interactions, they coordinate their nonverbal movements. Atypical movement coordination may contribute to social difficulties in autism. Further, distinct gender differences have been found in autism: males show reduced socio-communicative behaviours relative to females. Here, we explored whether interpersonal movement coordination differs between males and females with autism, compared to neurotypical (NT) adults. Thirteen adults with autism participated. Twenty-six NT controls are currently being tested. Participants complete a semi-structured interview while being video-recorded. Coordination between participant and examiner is measured using a video-based movement analysis. Females with autism demonstrated significantly greater movement coordination with their conversational partner, within a smaller range, than males. Given past findings, we expect that coordination differences between autistic and NT males will be greater than between autistic and NT females. These preliminary results suggest that investigating movement coordination during interaction may provide a tool for better understanding gender differences in ASD.