



Me reporting on myself: Further evidence in support of the validity of the Theory of Mind Inventory-Self Report when completed by autistic adults

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

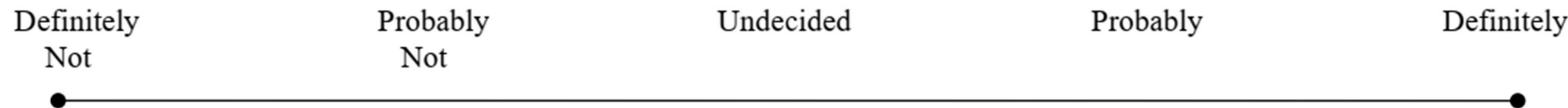
- Although self-report is being more widely used to assess a variety of characteristics in autism (e.g., anxiety, depression), self-assessment of social cognition remains woefully understudied.
- The **Theory of Mind Inventory: Self-Report-Adult (ToMI-SR-Adult)** was recently developed for this purpose [1].
- The ToMI-SR-Adult consists of 60 statements (Fig. 1) tapping advanced aspects of social cognition (e.g., metalinguistics, humor, deception) as applied in real world behavior, with higher scores indicating greater theory of mind (ToM).
- Initial examination of the ToMI-SR-Adult showed that it reliably distinguished autistic adults with subtle traits from neurotypical adults matched on age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Our objective was to further evaluate the psychometric properties of the ToMI-SR-Adult in a pilot sample of autistic adults who were capable language users but who were more diverse in their autism, language, and intellectual profiles.



Figure 1: Example of an item from the ToMI-SR-Adult

9. A 'double bluff' is a type of deception where someone tries to deceive another person by actually telling the truth. I understand what double bluff is and why people use it.



METHODS

Participants

- 13 autistic adults ages 22-64 years (M = 41; 7 male, 6 female) ranging in level of autistic traits, language, and intellectual abilities

Procedure

- Participants completed the ToMI-SR-Adult at two time points (retest interval ~4 weeks)
- At time 1, they also completed assessments of empathy (Empathy Quotient, EQ-10-Adult [2]), levels of autistic traits (Autism Quotient, AQ [3]; Social Responsiveness Scale, SRS-2 [4]), and psychological conditions (Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment, ASEBA-Adult-Self-Report [5]).

Statistical Analyses

- Pearson's correlations to assess test-retest reliability and convergent and discriminant validity
- Alpha of .10 to guard against the potential for type II errors in this pilot study

RESULTS

- The ToMI-SR-Adult demonstrated good test-retest reliability ($r = .89, p < .01$)

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

As expected, **higher scores on the ToMI-SR-Adult (i.e., greater ToM abilities)** were associated with:

- **Higher empathy** (higher EQ10 scores)
- **Lower levels of autistic traits** (lower AQ scores)
- **Reduced social impairments** (lower SRS scores, including in Social Awareness and Cognition)
- **Lower restrictive and repetitive behaviors** (SRS RRB)
- **Lower levels of thought disturbances** (ASEBA)

Measure	Correlation with ToMI-SR-Adult total score
EQ10	$r = .76, p < .01$ *
AQ	$r = -.51, p = .07$ *
SRS Composite	$r = -.58, p < .05$ *
SRS Social Awareness	$r = -.56, p < .05$ *
SRS Social Cognition	$r = -.58, p < .05$ *
SRS RRB	$r = -.66, p < .05$ *
SRS Social Motivation	$r = -.32, p = .28$
SRS social communication	$r = -.41, p = .16$
ASEBA thought disturbances	$r = -.52, p = .07$ *
ASEBA withdrawn	$r = -.28, p = .36$
ASEBA anxiety	$r = -.28, p = .36$

DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

As expected, **scores on the ToMI-SR-Adult** were *not* associated with:

- **Social Motivation (SRS)**
- **Psychological conditions** like withdrawal and anxiety (ASEBA)
- Surprisingly, **ToMI-SR-Adult scores** were *not* associated with **social communication skills (SRS)**, although this may be an artifact of insufficient power

CONCLUSIONS

We found support for the reliability and validity of the ToMI-SR-Adult, justifying further development and validation. This suggests that autism does not preclude self-awareness and that often, autistic adults are the best judges of their own subjective social-cognitive experiences.

REFERENCES

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