"A Quick Hello": Exploring Informal Self-Introductions of Autistic and Non-Autistic Adolescents over Zoom

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Introduction

- Peer relationships are particularly challenging for autistic adolescents (Cresswell et al., 2019)
- Double-empathy theory: social difficulties are due to a mismatch between autistic and non-autistic social communication (Milton, 2012)
- Brief first impressions of autistic individuals inform:
  - Judgments of personal attributes (Grossman, 2015)
  - Intent to pursue further interactions (Sasson et al., 2017)
- Critical to understand self-introductions (which contribute to first impressions) in autistic teens

Objectives

Investigate informal self-introductions by autistic and non-autistic adolescents in neurotype-concordant and -discordant dyads, specifically:

1. Number of topics covered
2. Duration of introduction
3. Percentage of matched topics between interlocutors

Participants

147 teens (12 - 15 years, *M* = 14.29 years)

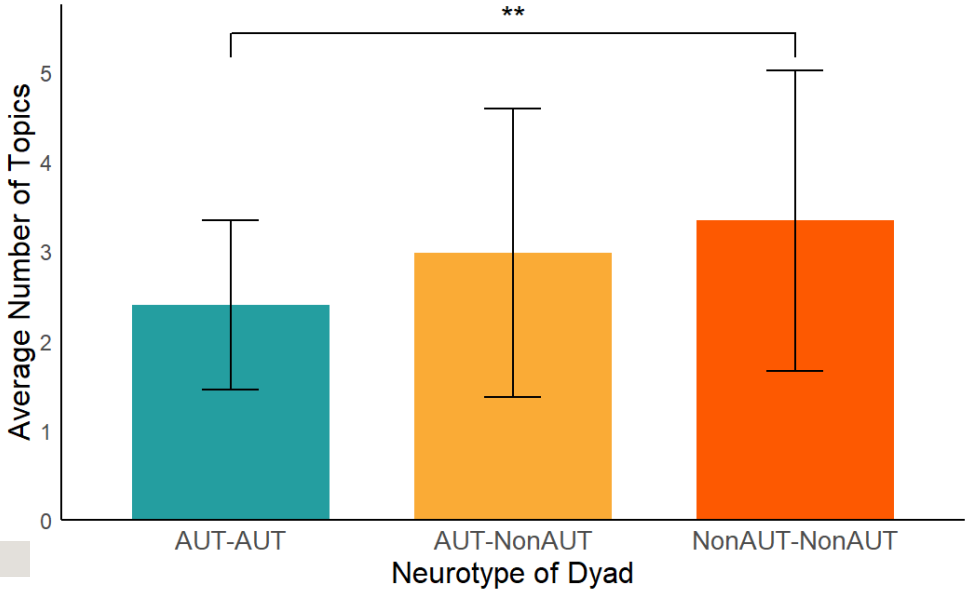
- 35 AUT-AUT, 67 AUT-NonAUT, 35 NonAUT-NonAUT dyads with
  - 31 AUT and 31 Non-AUT females
  - 43 AUT and 42 Non-AUT males

Method

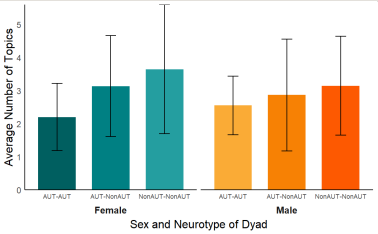
- Teens were in sex-matched neurotype-concordant and -discordant dyads
- At the start of online dyadic visits, participants were told to "introduce yourselves; *name1* and *name2* please say a quick 'hello'"
- Introductions coded for **number of topics**, **introduction duration**, and **topic matching** [proportion of categories (e.g., name, age, school) mentioned by both speakers]

Results

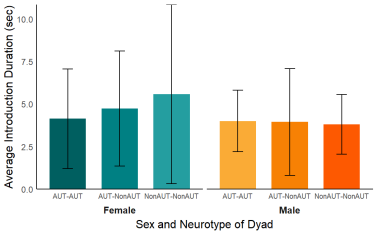
In informal introductions, non-autistic dyads covered more topics than autistic dyads, but all dyads tended speak for a similar length of time and matched each other's topics closely, regardless of neurotype.



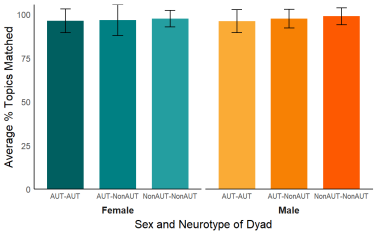
Number of topics: Significant effect of neurotype, $p = 0.03$. Dyads with two non-autistic teens covered more topics than dyads with two autistic teens ($\beta = 0.94$, $p = 0.009$).



Number of Topics: Linear regression with neurotype and sex showed that NonAUT-NonAUT dyads covered more topics than AUT-AUT dyads ($\beta = 0.95$, $p = 0.009$); no effect of sex, $p > 0.5$.



Introduction duration: No effects of neurotype or sex, *ps* > 0.1. Females (M = 4.78) tended to speak for longer than males (M = 3.92); but not significant, $\beta = 0.86$, $p = 0.11$.



Topic matching: No effects of neurotype or sex, *ps* > 0.16.

Discussion

- Results reveal both *similarities* and *differences* in self-introductions between autistic and non-autistic dyads.
- Next steps: 1) investigate influence of self-introductions on overall conversation ratings and 2) increase the sample size to test impact of sex on introduction duration.

References & Acknowledgements

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