

Cognitive autism research has mainly focussed on children and adults, but fortunately in the past few years research interest in the cognitive development of older adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) has increased. Given that (a) especially executive functioning is sensitive to age-related cognitive decline and (b) individuals with ASD often encounter executive dysfunctions, the current study will specifically focus on this cognitive domain. The main objective is to assess executive functioning in older adults with ASD by using a multi-method assessment. First we will focus on objective clinical neuropsychological tests. Secondly on the perceived executive functioning (EF) problems in daily life using subjective information from self- and proxy reports and explore possible correlations with the objective measures.

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IN OLDER ADULTS WITH AUTISM



In a cross-sectional design, we compared 50 participants (60-85 years) with a clinical ASD diagnosis (ASD group) and 51 non-ASD participants (60-83 years; comparison group) on the following cognitive domains: cognitive flexibility, planning, processing speed, and working memory as measured with cognitive tests and the adult version of the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Adult Version (BRIEF-A). We found no significant differences on several objective neuropsychological measures of EF. There was a non-significant trend towards evidence for more planning problems in the ASD group. Furthermore there were significant differences on measurements of self- and informant-report as the ASD group (and their respective informants) reported more EF-problems. These subjective measures only minimally correlated with neuropsychological measures (only planning). Subjective measures could offer valuable insight into everyday EF and the experienced problems in an ASD population. They should be considered as a cost-effective alternative neuropsychological testing.

**Should we use neuropsychological testing?**

**Should we use the BRIEF-A as a cost-effective alternative?**

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