

Special Issue

Sexuality in Autism Spectrum Disorders: Past, Present and Innovative Perspectives

Message from the Guest Editors

Historically, sexuality in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been understood as a taboo, yet neuropsychological and psychiatric studies reveal a multifaceted reconceptualization that emphasizes different facets, including desire, effort/motivation, anticipation and consummatory pleasure. Individuals with ASD are interested in sexual activity and pursuing romantic relationships, although they often lack psychosexual knowledge and engage in risky sexual behaviors. In the last few years, a high rate of problematic sexual behaviors has been described including public masturbation and paraphilic sexual interests. Despite this evidence, until now systematic studies on sexuality in individuals with ASD have been scarce, without clear indication about sexual orientation, gender-related differences and psycho-educational intervention. This Special Issue is to provide healthcare professionals and interested researchers with clear indications on the latest scientific evidence about the characterization of sexual behaviors in ASD together with the application of innovative perspectives (device, robot, pharmacological) targeting intervention designed specifically for ASD individuals.

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