

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis focuses on social cognition in children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The theoretical part of the thesis describes the clinical picture of ASD, the etiopathogenesis and the possibilities for screening and diagnosis are also outlined. Special attention is given to the unit of ASD without intellectual disability and with mild or no impairment of functional speech. Social cognition and its main components are also introduced, with a subsequent contextualization in relation to ASD.

The main aim of the empirical part was to compare the performance of children with ASD with that of typically developing children in tests of social cognition, and secondarily in tests of speech functions using the Neuropsychological Battery for Children (NB-D). A secondary aim was to map the specifics of children with ASD in terms of intellectual performance. The results of the analysis indicated lower performance in social cognition tests among children with ASD compared to the control group with comparable nonverbal intelligence. No significant differences were found when compared with the control group of similar verbal intelligence, suggesting a possible link between verbal intellectual abilities and social cognitive performance. In the comparison of speech functions measured by the NB-D, no significant differences were observed between children with ASD and typically developing children. In terms of intellectual performance, a significant difference was found between children with ASD and the standardization sample, indicating that the group of children with ASD, even without intellectual disability, may exhibit some alterations in their intellectual profile. However, these results need to be verified on a larger research sample.

Key words: Intellectual performance; Neuropsychological Battery for Children (NB-D); Theory of mind; Speech functions