

Language abilities and disabilities in autism: Empirical findings and clinical implications

The presentation will integrate results from ten years of research in the area of language profiles in children and adults with ASD, in an attempt to understand receptive and expressive patterns, skills and deficits, and their clinical implications. Since language plays such an important role in differentiation between autism spectrum disorders and other psychiatric disorders, and is a predictor of better outcomes, its importance in ASD cannot be minimized. Reported here will be the results from four studies focusing on syntactic cues, referential language, anaphora and other linguistic structures. In particular, I plan to discuss the interplay between language and understanding social interactions, an area of interest for Jonathan Fine.

For Jonathan Fine, who was always searching to understand the function and structure of language in communication, this area of research was especially important. His work analyzing narratives and searching for patterns led him to characterize ASD and other clinical syndromes through language and linguistic configurations. By describing the results of these studies and their clinical implications, I hope to honor his memory.

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