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## Formal Characteristics of Thematic Apperception Test Narratives of Adult Patients with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. A Preliminary Study

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the usefulness of a Thematic Apperception Test (TAT, Murray, 1943) narrative scoring system to detect signs of autistic information processing. A total of 27 patients with an Autism Spectrum Disorder were compared to a control group (N = 67) of patients with other psychiatric disorders. As an external indirect measure of social functioning two dimensions of the Social Cognition and Object Relation Scale (SCORS; Westen, 1985) were used: Capacity for Emotional and Moral Investment in Relationships and Understanding of Social Causality. TAT narratives were rated on the prevalence of eight phenomena, as proposed by Edrisi and Eurelings-Bontekoe (2009). Autistic patients showed a lower level of social insight and were particularly characterized by high scores on Weak Central Coherence, Jumping to Conclusions and Difficulty with describing/interpreting movements. Results provide preliminary support for the usefulness of the TAT scoring system, but need to be replicated using larger samples and blind scoring.

### KEYWORDS

Autism, Thematic Apperception Test, Social Cognition, Adults

### Cite this paper

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