

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to expand the research in sexuality by assessing the relationship between BDSM behaviors and characteristics (symptoms) of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This relationship has not been explored, despite the increasing prevalence of both ASD individuals and those who practice BDSM (bondage & discipline, dominance & submission, and sadism & masochism) (Christensen, Baio, Braun, et al., 2016; Richters, Visser, Rissel, Grulich, & Smith, 2008). The similarities in repetitive or ritualistic behaviors as well as sensory stimulation needs and techniques in both symptoms of ASD and behaviors in BDSM suggest that there may be similarities in the two populations, which is important to examine (Leekam, Prior, & Uljarevic, 2011; Sagarin, Lee, & Klement, 2015). We hypothesized that motor movements would positively correlate with the BDSM Sensory behaviors, attention to details would positively correlate with BDSM Control behaviors, and social skills would negatively correlate with reported number of sexual partners but positively correlate with masturbation frequency/use of objects during masturbation. All the hypotheses were supported except for the social skills and frequency of masturbation with an object. Instead, there was a positive correlation between social skills and frequency of masturbation with hands, which we believe may have something to do with the sensory input an object might bring.

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