A Qualitative Analysis of Visual Sensory Quotes from Autobiographies by Autistic Authors

Introduction

- Sensory behaviors (SB) are one of four DSM-5 criteria for Restricted and Repetitive Behavior (RRB) in ASD
- Visual SBs are one of the most common RRBs and an emerging area that explores the brain-behavior connection
- Autobiographies by autistic authors provide an opportunity to understand atypical Visual SBs, preferences, and experiences in ASD
- The goal of this study was to investigate Visual SB quotes from autistic authors and characterize experiences in terms of thematic categories

- 13 autobiographies
- Identified 49 quotes related to atypical visual behaviors
- Qualitative content analysis to divide quotes into SEEK (things authors liked to watch) and AVOID (things authors disliked watching) categories
- Thematic analysis conducted to identify themes of attraction and avoidance

OVERALL RESULTS

13 Books 49 Quotes

SEEK RESULTS

**Liked Watching:** Sand, Water, Coins, Tops, Wheels, Sliding Doors

**Exemplars**
- **Movement:** flowing (3), spinning (3), twirling (2), dribbling, dropping (2), sliding back & forth
- **Color:** bright (2), day-glo paint
- **Shape:** edge of door (straight), level, thick line
- **Other:** rhythmic pattern, darkness, flames, dark print on white pages

AVOID RESULTS

**Disliked Watching:** Glare, Headlights, Sun, Light

**Exemplars**
- **Lights:** Bright (5), fluorescent (3), strobe (3), flickering (2), reflect (2)
- **Color:** A lot (2), yellow, brown, blinding, washed out
- **Other:** People’s eyes, too many pictures, all at once

**Conclusions**

- Autistic authors' autobiographies are an underutilized complement to RRB research
- Seek or Avoid watching themes showed what was preferred or avoided; feeling themes suggested why
- Most visual seeking feelings related to holding attention
- Most visual avoiding feelings related to sensory overload and discomfort

**Discussion**

- There were consistent themes in authors descriptions of atypical Visual Sensory Behaviors
- Seek or Avoid watching themes showed what was preferred or avoided; feeling themes suggested why
- Most visual seeking feelings related to holding attention
- Most visual avoiding feelings related to sensory overload and discomfort

**Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program**

**Westchester Institute for Human Development, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and New York Medical College**

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**Quotes by Book**