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Tactile Defensiveness and Social Patterns in Autism

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TACTILE DEFENSIVENESS AND SOCIAL PATTERNS IN AUTISM

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The expression of tactile defensiveness (TD) or aversion to tactile stimulation varies among individuals. Little research has been conducted evaluating predictors of this construct particularly in the arena of autism. Based on a review of past literature regarding touch and social development, it was hypothesized that social patterns in autism would be correlated with the expression of tactile defensiveness. Surveys were used in this present study to evaluate the relationship between social patterns and TD as well as correlations between variables such as severity of autistic characteristics, IQ, and chronological age. Results have implications for understanding and treating TD in persons with autism.