

## TOURETTES – EVERYBODY TICS DIFFERENTLY

### Can People With Autism (ASD) Have Tics?



**There are many similarities between Tourette Syndrome (TS) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). They are both neurobiological conditions that predominantly developed during childhood and affect mostly boys. The tics associated with ASD are consistently more aimless or repetitive behaviours, such as ordering or arranging behaviours, as well as repeating words and repeating actions that are observed in others.**

As is often the case in ASD, difficulties with displaying empathy can also occur in people with tic disorders. One study of 58 children and adolescents with TS found that 37 of them scored above the clinical cut-off for ASD. They were also rated by their teachers as having major social interactive difficulties. These children were reported to lack the ability to adjust to expectations or demands by peers and did not notice obvious negative reactions of those around them.

Abnormal motor movements present in both ASD and TS; however, the types of movements vary. Tics in individuals with Tourette Syndrome tend to be quick movements that last for only brief periods; in contrast, individuals with ASD who present with movements, tend to present with those that are more aimless, repetitive, coordinated, and unhurried.

Tic disorders associated with Tourette's vary in severity and site over time, whereas the aimless and repetitive movements associated with ASD often tend to remain unchanged. There is however much more research to be conducted in this area.

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### Tics in individuals with intellectual disability

Tics have also been observed in individuals with intellectual disability with the prevalence of tics appearing to increase with the severity of the disability. When individuals with intellectual disability only, are studied, the prevalence of tics is reported to be around 5-10%. However, consistent with the literature on ASD and tic disorder reviewed previously, when individuals have both an intellectual disability and ASD, over 50% may present with tics.



*Adapted by Get into Neurodiversity for a global audience.*

*Valsamma Eapen, Rudi Črnčec, Sarah McPherson and Corina Snedden (2013). Tic Disorders and Learning Disability: Clinical Characteristics, Cognitive Performance and Comorbidity. Australasian Journal of Special Education, 37, pp 162-172 doi:10.1017/jse.2013.2*

[http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S103001121300002X](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S103001121300002X)