

# Sensitivity and emotional awareness in autism

## *REVUE MÉDECINE ET PHILOSOPHIE*

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article proposes a characterization of the sensitivity and emotional awareness of people with autism through terminological clarification of the concepts of emotions and consciousness. It highlights the contradictory character that seems to characterize the sensitivity of autistic people: while their internal body states reach consciousness much more frequently than for neurotypical people, their emotions are understood in a descriptive way and not through these bodily sensations, as is the case for neurotypical people. In autistic people, the emotional understanding seems to be detached from the emotional feeling, yet very present. The pooling of the results of studies highlighting these peculiarities makes it possible to propose an explanatory hypothesis of this apparent contradiction; hypothesis that for autistic people, the overwhelming nature of the body's feelings is avoided thanks to a compensatory strategy of explicit access to emotions, detached from the emotional feeling.

**KEYWORDS** interoception; phenomenology ; emotional awareness; self-consciousness ; emotion.