



# MONOTROPISM

## “AN INTEREST-BASED NERVOUS SYSTEM”<sup>1</sup>

Attention resources allocated at high concentrations.



### POLYTROPISM: ATTENTION RESOURCES SPREAD OUT

Attention resources are distributed widely across many interests, responsibilities, and spheres. Polytropics can pay attention to low-interest obligations and keep track of multiple interests at the same time.



### MONOTROPISM: ATTENTION RESOURCES TO FEWER THINGS

Attention resources are focused on one interest or a few interests at a time. It is exceptionally hard to allocate attention resources to low-interest obligations or keep track of multiple interests at the same time.



### MONOTROPIC FLOW: ATTENTION TUNNEL / RABBIT HOLE

When they are allowed, monotropics get into a hyper-focus “zone” that makes their processing and creative abilities sharper, faster, more efficient, more productive, and sometimes euphoric.



### TRANSITION AND CHANGE: NO BRAKES

Monotropics find it very difficult to switch in and out of their flow. It is like skiing, where you have to gently ease to a stop. Transitions require a lot of mental preparation. It is hard to get started on a second thing if waiting on something already scheduled.



### MONOTROPIC SPLIT: ATTENTION OVERLOAD

Overload happens when attention has to be split—such as when plans change suddenly. Instead of reducing the resources to each demand like polytropics, monotropics continue to put out a high level of focus per demand, which quickly leads to depletion.

(1) Monotropism: Explanations. (n.d.). Monotropism. Retrieved March 27, 2024, from <https://monotropism.org/explanations>

Murray, D., Lesser, M., & Lawson, W. (2005). Attention, monotropism and the diagnostic criteria for autism. *Autism*, 9(2), 139–156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361305051398>



# MONOTROPISM QUESTIONNAIRE

## MONOTROPISM QUESTIONNAIRE

18

### Figures

Figure 1: Mean monotropism questionnaire scores by autism status

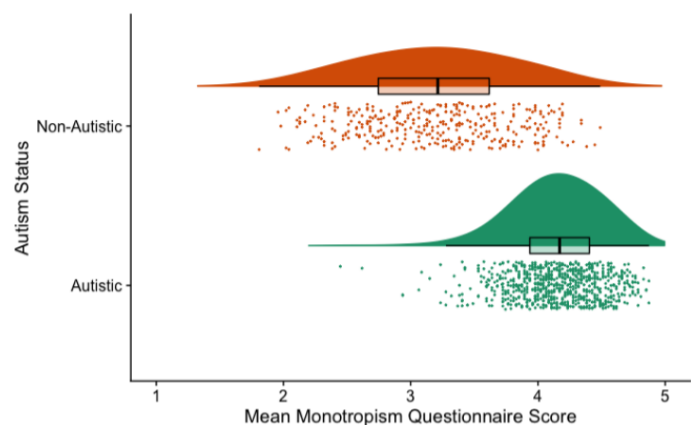
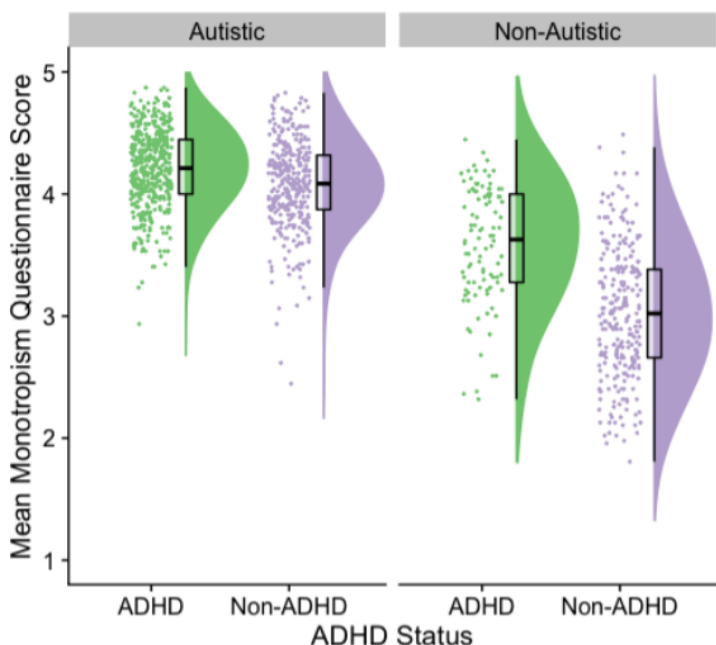


Figure 2: Mean monotropism questionnaire scores by autism status and ADHD status



### Demographic Characteristic

### Count (%)

		Autistic	Non-Autistic	Total
ADHD status				
ADHD (clinical diagnosis)	ADHD group	174 (23.02%)	43 (12.15%)	217 (19.55%)
ADHD (self-identified)		73 (9.66%)	6 (1.69%)	79 (7.12%)
I think I may have ADHD		186 (24.60%)	51 (14.41%)	237 (21.35%)
Unsure	No ADHD group	124 (16.40%)	54 (15.25%)	178 (16.04%)
No ADHD		199 (26.32%)	199 (56.21%)	398 (35.86%)
No information		0 (0%)	1 (0.28%)	1 (0.09%)
Autism status				
Autistic (clinical diagnosis)	Autistic group	394 (52.12%)	-	394 (35.50%)
Autistic (self-identified)		204 (26.98%)	-	204 (18.38%)
I think I may be autistic		158 (20.90%)	-	158 (14.23%)
Unsure	Non-autistic group	-	87 (24.58%)	87 (7.84%)
Not autistic		-	267 (75.42%)	267 (24.05%)

## Eight Factors

1. Special interests
2. Rumination and anxiety
3. Need for routines
4. Environmental impact on the attention tunnel
5. Losing track of other factors when focusing on special interests
6. Struggle with decision-making
7. Anxiety-reducing effects of special interests
8. Managing social interactions

Garau, V., Murray, A. L., Woods, R., Chown, N., Hallett, S., Murray, F., ... Fletcher-Watson, S. (2023, June 14). Development and Validation of a Novel Self-Report Measure of Monotropism in Autistic and Non-Autistic People: The Monotropism Questionnaire. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/ft73y>

Monotropism Questionnaire. (n.d.). Retrieved March 28, 2024 from <https://dlcincluded.github.io/MQ/>