This study was investigating whether high functioning adults with autism and Asperger syndrome had deficiencies employing a theory of mind. Earlier research by Simon Baron-Cohen and others had demonstrated that children with autism had difficulties with first and second order tests, such as the Sally Anne test. However further research has suggested that adults with autism and Asperger syndrome can pass such tests.

Further research by Happe has demonstrated that adults with autism and Asperger syndrome had problems passing the strange stories task which involved participants understanding another person’s mental state.

Because the first and second order tests, as well as the strange stories task, were designed for children Baron Cohen et al. developed a new test called the ‘Reading the mind in the Eyes Task’ (or Eyes Task for short). This advanced test aims to discover if high functioning adults with autism and Asperger syndrome do have problems with mind reading which it is argued is related to the ability to employ a theory of mind.

**Aim**

The main aim of this experiment was to investigate if high functioning adults with autism or Asperger syndrome would be impaired on a theory of mind test called the ‘Reading the Mind in the Eyes Task’.

The researchers were also interested to find out if females would be better than males on the ‘Reading the Mind in the Eyes Task’.