Abstract

This study investigated the differences in early maladaptive schemas between adult outpatients with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (n = 48) and a non-clinical controls (n = 86). Both groups completed the Young Schema Questionnaire. There were significant differences between the groups in all the early maladaptive schemas, except self-sacrifice and approval/recognition seeking. Logistic regression analysis revealed that early maladaptive schemas such as insufficient self-control, emotional deprivation, and vulnerability to harm and illness significantly discriminated between the groups, suggesting that some early maladaptive schemas are more important than others for depicting the characteristics of adults with autism spectrum disorder.

Keywords: adults; autism spectrum disorders; early maladaptive schemas

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) covers a range of developmental disorders characterized by aberrations in the domains of social interaction, communication, and stereotyped or repetitive behavior patterns (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition). ASD is relatively common, affecting approximately 1% of the adult household population in England (Brugha et al., 2011). It should be regarded as a lifelong clinical entity, and it is associated with significant disability across the life span (Vannucchi et al., 2013). However, adults with ASD are infrequently diagnosed with this condition because they usually manifest clinical symptoms such as schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorders, mood disorders, or personality disorders (Hofvander et al., 2009; Vannucchi et al., 2013; Wing, 1981). Approximately 70% of all adults with