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THE EDINBURGH SOCIAL COGNITION TEST: A NOVEL MEASURE OF SOCIAL COGNITION

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Background

- Social cognitive abilities encompass processes such as Theory of Mind, empathy, emotional recognition, moral judgements and the understanding of social norms.
- To our knowledge, there is currently no task which assesses multiple social cognitive processes at once.
- Moreover, current social cognitive tools either have limited use in clinical settings or do not measure the intended abilities in sufficient detail.

Current Project

- We present a novel social cognitive task called The Edinburgh Social Cognition Test (ESCoT) to address these limitations.
- The ESCoT consists of ten dynamic, animated scenarios that are all self-contained narratives and depict an array of interactions.
- It incorporates the findings of a dichotomised Theory of Mind network (Shamay-Tsoory et al., 2003; Shamay-Tsoory & Aharon-Peretz, 2007), explicitly assessing Cognitive Theory of Mind and Affective Theory of Mind.
- To investigate an individual's comprehension of the societal laws that govern behaviour, the ESCoT examines the Understanding of Social Norms.

Participants already recruited

31 Older Adults (65 – 85 years old)

Mean Age = 72.06 (5.98)

Education = 14.48 (2.99)

16 Younger adults (18 – 35 years old)

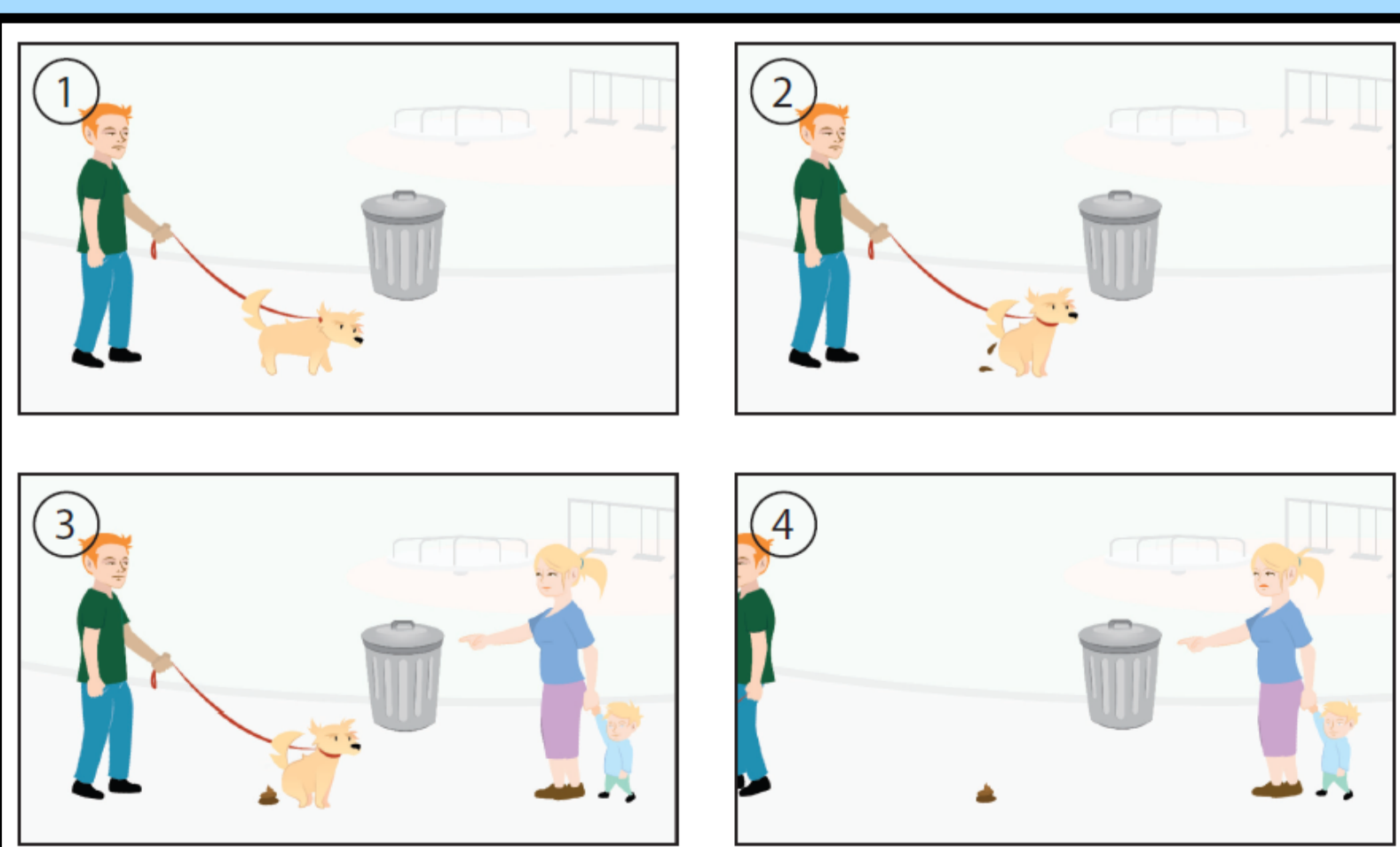
Mean Age = 27.56 (5.28)

Education = 16.69 (3.14)

11 Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (18 – 85 years old)

Mean Age = 32.64 (15.17)

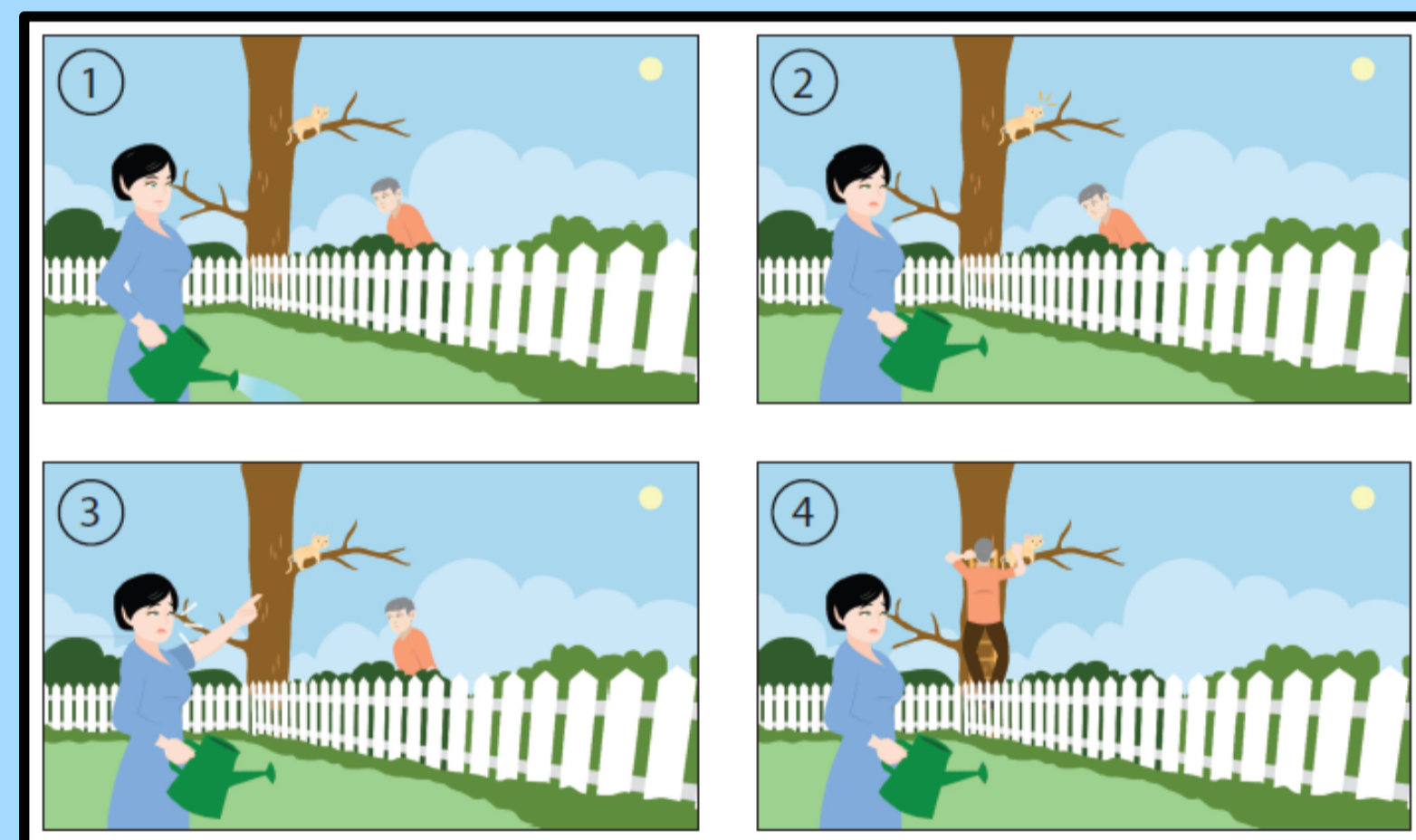
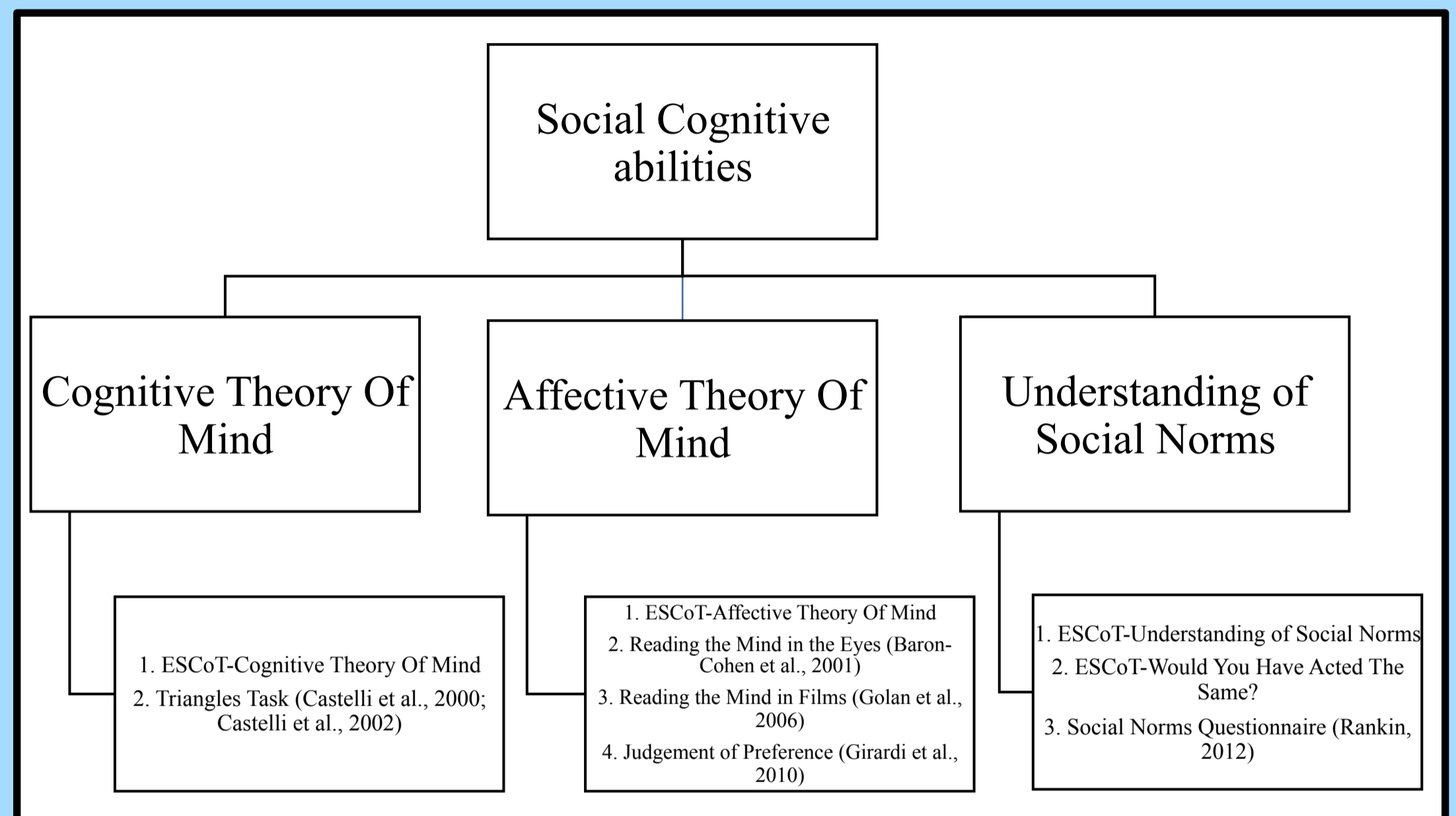
Education = 15.27 (2.80)



Example Scenario- norm violation

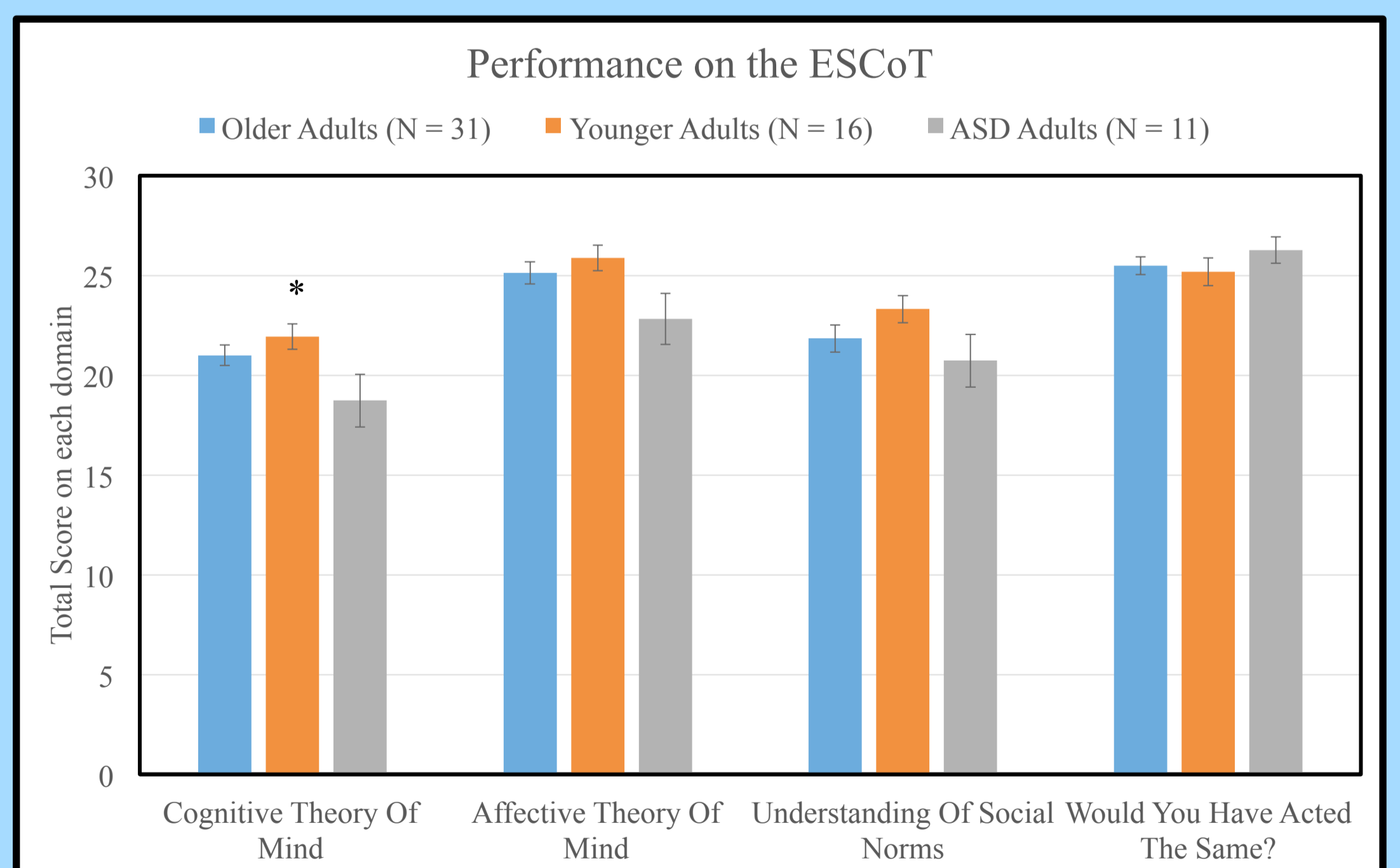
Measures

To validate the ESCoT, participants' performance on the task is compared to existing and established measures found in the literature. Participants also complete the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI-II)



Example Scenario- non-norm violation

Preliminary Results



Preliminary One-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference on the Cognitive Theory of Mind domain between groups, $F(2, 55) = 3.53, p = .03$. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that ASD Adults achieved significantly lower scores than Older and Younger Adults on this domain.

Implications for research

It is hoped that this task will be developed into an appropriate clinical tool for the assessment of social cognitive abilities in healthy and clinical populations.