ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PREMORBID ADJUSTMENT AND FACIAL EMOTIONS RECOGNITION IN SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Objectives: The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between the premorbid adjustment (PA) and deficits in facial recognition (FR), in persons with first-episode psychosis (FEP).

Background and aims: FR is a fundamental cognitive process linked to emotions processing, both usually impaired in persons with schizophrenia (1). Studies have reported impaired affect identification as a prominent clinical feature in schizophrenia. Furthermore, deficits in premorbid social and academic performance have been suggested to be good predictors of severity of positive symptoms, social knowledge, and negative emotion recognition deficit (2). This study aimed to conduct additional research by assessing FR deficits and PA in persons with FEP.

Materials and methods: The sample of FEP consisted of 33 patients (age range: 18-45) with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, psychotic disorder not otherwise specified, delusional disorder, schizoaffective disorder, brief psychotic disorder or schizophreniform disorder, whose symptoms began in less than five years. Level of functioning was assessed with the Premorbid Adjustment Scale (PAS), and the Faces Test was used in order to assess the FR. Pearson correlation was used to relate PA and FR.

Results: Deficits in basic-level Faces Test were significantly linked to poorer academic performance ($p = 0,046$) and premorbid sociability ($p = 0,043$). Specifically, deficits in FR expressing anger and guilt, were statistically related to poorer academic performance ($p = 0,011$ and $p = 0,049$, respectively).

Correlations		Faces Test (Basic-level)	Faces Test (Complex-level)	Faces Test (Total)
*Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed)				
PAS Sociability	Pearson Correlation	-,355*	-,202	-,264
	Bilateral Significance	,043	,259	,137
PAS Academic	Pearson Correlation	-,350*	-,122	-,220
	Bilateral Significance	,046	,498	,219

Two-Sample t-Test for Equal Means											
Anger face	Recognition	Not recognition	Mean differences	t	Bilateral Significance	Guilt face	Recognition	Not recognition	Mean differences	t	Bilateral Significance
Mean Academic PAS	,2500	,6111	,36111	2,712	,011	Mean Academic PAS	,2466	,4549	,20821	2,049	,049
Mean Social PAS	,3202	,4688	,14859	1,155	,257	Mean Social PAS	,3082	,4813	,17306	1,905	,066

Conclusions: Deficits in negative emotion recognition are linked to poorer academic premorbid performance. These results suggest that emotion recognition should be addressed in early interventions.

References

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