

## EVALUATION OF SENSE OF HUMOR IN SCHIZOPHRENIA AS SUCH AND AFFECTED BY TREATMENT: ABSTRACT THINKING, SEMANTIC AMBIGUITY OR LATERAL NEURONAL DISINHIBITION

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**Introduction:** Schizophrenic patients have shown by experience to have reduced sense of humor and do not understand jokes completely.

**Objectives:** It is unclear whether this is the result of a global emotional numbness, a dysfunctional abstract thinking or problem of semantic field. Besides, the relevance of this issue in mood disturbances in psychotic patients must be reappraised.

**Aims:** Increase of sociability in schizophrenic patients by way of augmenting sense of humor.

**Methods:** Hundred schizophrenic patients were evaluated by way of interview and three questionnaires for their sense of humor and abstract thinking in response to non sexual jokes. They were asked to tell ten jokes and grade them in regard to funniness. In addition ten jokes were told to them and asked them to grade these jokes in a 10 strength scale. These steps were repeated after 12 weeks of conventional antipsychotic treatment in addition to short courses of psychotherapies.

**Results:** Schizophrenic patients have an overall reduced sense of humor for jokes even if they can understand the core reality of them hence not a matter of deranged abstract thinking. They show also reduced expression of joy in response to jokes that they have rated highest. This denotes some degrees of emotional numbness. Treatment of patients with conventional antipsychotics cannot completely restore the sense of humor even after a 3 months period.

**Conclusions:** We conclude that sense of humor is a central issue in social functioning and some additional treatments must be used to normalize patients with schizophrenia.