

STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL NEUROIMAGING IN EARLY SCHIZOPHRENIA: TRANSLATING RESEARCH EVIDENCE INTO CLINICAL UTILITY

S. Borgwardt

Department of Psychiatry (UPK), University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

Early clinical detection and intervention in schizophrenia has recently become a major objective of mental health services, while research on the early phases of the disorder may provide important clues to the pathophysiology underlying schizophrenia. Thus, the identification of a clinical syndrome that reflect a predisposition to schizophrenia is fundamental from a clinical and a research perspective. The onset of schizophrenia is usually preceded by a prodromal phase characterized by functional decline and subtle prodromal symptoms. However, clinical criteria currently employed to define a high-risk mental state for psychosis have relatively low validity and specificity. Consequently there is an urgent need of reliable biomarkers that underlie schizophrenia. Structural and functional neuroimaging methods have rapidly developed into a powerful tool in biological psychiatry as they provide an unprecedented opportunity for the investigation of brain structure and function. In this core-symposium it will be aimed to show that neuroimaging studies of the prodromal phases of psychosis have the potentials to identify core structural and functional markers of vulnerability to psychosis and to clarify the ongoing changes during the transition from high-risk to first episode psychosis.

Reference:

Borgwardt S, Fusar-Poli P (2012) Third-generation neuroimaging in early schizophrenia: translating research evidence into clinical utility. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 200:270-272.