
NEUROCOGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION IN ADOLESCENTS WITH EARLY ONSET PSYCHOSIS

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Introduction

Neurocognitive deficit (executive functions, verbal and spatial learning and memory, visual processing and attention) is a core feature of schizophrenia.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to identify the cognitive deficit in adolescents with early onset psychosis (EOP - schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, depression with psychotic features). The secondary objective is to examine if the cognitive deficits are global or specific.

Methods

This study is longitudinal, during a period of one year and a half. Twenty-eight adolescents at first psychotic episode (15 with EOP and 13 with other psychotic disorders) agreed to participate to this study and were assessed during their hospitalization in a university clinic for child and adolescent psychiatry, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The age of patients ranged from 10 to 17 years. The diagnosis was based on DSM-IV criteria. 32 healthy adolescents, volunteers, formed the control group and were matched by age and gender. All the patients and the adolescents from control group were assessed for intelligence level using Raven Test and those with mental retardation were excluded. The neurocognitive functioning was assessed with Trail Making A and B, verbal fluency tasks, Wisconsin Card Sorting Test and Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test.

Results

Adolescents with EOP at first psychotic episode had significant neurocognitive dysfunction as compared to healthy adolescents from the control group.

Conclusions

Our results are consistent with those of previous studies and it is clear that many adolescents with early onset schizophrenia show substantial impairment across multiple domains of neurocognition.