

EPP0085

The effects of reading literary fiction on the measurement and development of mentalization skills among schizophrenic patients

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Introduction: Following the mentalization of interpersonal relations can be improved through reading for which the influence of literary fiction can also serve as a model. Schizophrenia is characterized by extensive deficits in mentalization, and the amelioration of these impairments is a major focus in psychosocial treatment research. Reading literature can be a potential tool in improving mentalizing skills.

Objectives: We aimed to examine and compare healthy participants with patients living with schizophrenia, focusing on measuring mentalizing skills and the impact of reading literary fiction on their mentalization skills.

Methods: 47 persons with schizophrenia in remission and 48 healthy controls were assessed and compared with Short Story Task (SST) a new measurement of ToM. SST proved to be a sensitive tool, to individual differences. After reading the short story "The End of Something" (Hemingway) a structured interview was done with 14 questions.

Results: We found that patients with schizophrenia performed significantly worse in their ToM scores compared to healthy controls (ANOVA test, $p < 0,05$). Previous reading experiences correlated significantly with mentalizing scores not just in healthy controls (Independent Samples T-test, $p < 0,05$) but also in patients with schizophrenia. ToM scores were twice as high among those who had prior reading experiences in the schizophrenia group ($MS = 3,91$, $SD = 3,166$, $M = 8,08$, $SD = 4,542$; $p < 0,05$, $t = -3,509$).

Conclusions: We found that mentalization skills could be improved by regular reading. Our results could also be influenced by several other factors such as empathy skills, identification with the characters etc. Our results and conclusions are in line with the results of international research on this topic.

Disclosure: No significant relationships.

Keywords: theory of mind; schizophrenia; mentalisation; reading; literary fiction

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Exploring the association between brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) levels and longitudinal psychopathological and cognitive changes in Sardinian psychotic patients

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Introduction: Schizophrenia spectrum disorders are among the most debilitating mental disorders and evidence on its pathophysiological underpinnings is scant. The brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) appears to be involved in the pathophysiology of these complex psychiatric disorders.

Objectives: The present study investigates the longitudinal variation of serum BDNF levels in a 24-month observational cohort study of Sardinian psychotic patients (LABSP). This study assessed the variation in BDNF serum levels and its relationship with psychopathological and cognitive changes. Further, we also examined if genetic variations within the BDNF gene could moderate these relationships.

Methods: Every six months 105 LABSP patients were assessed for their BDNF serum levels, as well as for a series of psychopathological, cognitive, and drug-related measures. Four tag single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) within the BDNF gene were selected and analyzed using Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). Longitudinal data were analyzed using mixed-effects linear regression models (MLRM).

Results: Analysis showed significantly lower peripheral BDNF levels in psychotic patients with depressive and negative symptoms. BDNF levels were also decreased in patients scoring lower in cognitive measures such as symbol coding and semantic fluency. In addition, Val66Met polymorphism within the BDNF gene significantly moderated the relationship between the severity of negative symptoms and BDNF levels.

Conclusions: Our findings are consistent with previous literature suggesting that peripheral BDNF levels are associated with some cognitive domains and mood disruption in major psychosis. The results also suggest the lack of association between most BDNF genetic variants, except Val66Met polymorphism, with the severity of negative symptoms.

Disclosure: No significant relationships.

Keywords: schizofrenia; bdnf; biomarker; Psychosis

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Resting-state Functional Connectivity within Frontoparietal Network in Schizophrenia Patients and Healthy Individuals with Better and Worse Executive Functions

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Introduction: Patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders (SP) demonstrate heterogeneity in executive functions (EF) associated