



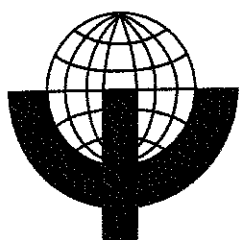
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ABSTRACTS

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COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: EVIDENCE DERIVED FROM THE PORTUGUESE ADAPTATION OF THE WAIS-III

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Aims: Neurocognitive impairments are commonly considered a core feature of Schizophrenia. The aim of this study was to compare the performance between schizophrenic patients and healthy matched controls in different cognitive measures derived from the Portuguese adaptation of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale 3rd Edition (WAIS-III).

Methods: Sample consisted of 37 Portuguese patients diagnosed with schizophrenia and 37 normal controls, matched for the following categories: age, education and geographic region. All subjects were assessed with a neurocognitive battery which comprised both verbal (Arithmetic, Vocabulary, Digit Span, and Letter-Number Sequencing) and performance subtests (Picture Completion, Digit Symbol - Coding, and Symbol Search) from the WAIS-III. Controls were part of a broader study designed to adapt the WAIS-III to Portugal.

Results: Patients performed significantly worse than controls in most of the subtests. The only exception occurred with the Vocabulary subtest, in which no significant differences were found. The subtests in which schizophrenic patients showed the most pronounced deficits were Picture Completion, Arithmetic and Digit Symbol - Coding.

Conclusions: The results confirm the presence of generalized cognitive impairments in Schizophrenia. These deficits appear to be more prominent in performance tests than in verbal tests. The inexistence of impairment in the Vocabulary subtest should be carefully examined in further investigations. However in the project Measurement and Treatment Research to Improve Cognition in Schizophrenia the cognitive dimension Verbal Comprehension was excluded for being considered to be extremely resistant to change.

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IS EMOTION RECOGNITION A POSSIBLE MEDIATOR BETWEEN BASIC NEUROCOGNITION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING IN SCHIZOPHRENIA?

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Aims: Social cognition has been proposed as one possible mediator between neurocognition and functional outcome in Schizophrenia. Social cognition is a broad construct including different domains such as emotion processing, social perception and theory of mind. In this study we will focus on emotion recognition in order to analyse the associations between cognitive skills, facial emotion recognition and psychosocial functioning and to determine if emotion recognition mediated the relationship between cognition and psychosocial functioning.

Methods: 30 Portuguese patients diagnosed with Schizophrenia were selected to participate in the study. Participants were assessed on a test battery derived from the Working Memory and Processing Speed indices of WAIS-III and through a facial emotion recognition experiment. Life Skills Profile (LSP) was used to determine psychosocial functioning. Given the large number of parameters to be esti-

mated we created a composite score of neurocognition based on the mean z-transformed scores of the cognitive measures.

Results: Neurocognition, emotion recognition and psychosocial functioning were significantly intercorrelated. Through the causal steps method developed by Baron and Kenny we observed that controlling for the mediator (emotion recognition) the association between neurocognition and psychosocial functioning decreased. Sobel test revealed that emotional recognition better mediated the Communication dimension of LSP than the total LSP score.

Conclusions: There was found some evidence to support emotion recognition as a mediator of psychosocial functioning. Communication was better mediated by emotional recognition than general psychosocial function, since the latter include other areas of function such as self-care skills, which are not dependent of social interaction.