

Theoretical Background and Treatment of Social Cognitive Impairment in Schizophrenia- What is Known and What is Needed?

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Introduction

Despite the effective symptomatic treatment of schizophrenia, poor functional outcomes are still a challenge. Neurocognition has been identified for a long time as a main background factor of these. According to the findings the neurocognitive aspects are not suitable to explain all the functional deficits of patients with schizophrenia. For this reason another aspect of the cognition needs to be investigated to understand our patients: the social cognition. The development of social cognitive interventions has also received growing attention in schizophrenia research in the recent years.

Objectives

We reviewed the literature and collected information about the theoretical background of social cognitive impairments and social cognitive treatments.

Aims

Our aim was to produce an integrative overview of the above mentioned theories and present new treatment possibilities.

Methods

PubMed suggested relevant studies, exploring the role of social cognitive impairments and efficacy of remediation programmes aimed at improving social cognition.

Results

We got a comprehensive view of psychopathological, neuroanatomical and theoretical aspects. Our findings supported the determining role of social cognitive impairments in schizophrenia and the importance of new treatment approaches. The overview revealed significant effects of treatments on ToM, emotional recognition, social perception and attributional style.

Conclusion

The social cognition is a notable field of the cognition in schizophrenia. Remediation programs are promising approaches to improve social functioning in schizophrenia, and probably a useful strategy for early treatment in psychosis, however according to our overview more researches are necessary to elaborate definitional and methodological inaccuracies and eliminate uncertainty of efficacy.