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## TRAINING OF AFFECT RECOGNITION (TAR) AND FUNCTIONAL OUTCOME IN SCHIZOPHRENIA

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**Objectives:** An increasing number of studies focus on general deficits in identifying, differentiating and recalling of facial emotions in schizophrenia. According to preliminary results antipsychotics alone show only little effect on social cognition. We investigated the effects of new antipsychotics when combined with a computer-based training on affect recognition.

**Methods:** Schizophrenic patients (n=20) receiving treatment with new antipsychotics in combination with a six-week Training on Affect Recognition (TAR) were compared with a randomized group of patients (n=18) receiving Treatment As Usual (TAU). Effects on social cognition were tested with the Vienna Emotion Recognition Tasks (VERT-K). In addition, we investigated neurocognitive performance using the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test (WCST), Testbattery for Attentional Performance (TAP): "Alertness", "Vigilance" and "Working memory". Negative symptoms and quality of life were assessed using the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) and the short version of the WHO-Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL-Bref).

**Results:** In comparison to the control group the TAR group showed significant improvements in regard to affect recognition in general as well as in recognizing sad and happy faces. In addition, we found significant improvements for the TAR group regarding executive functions, quality of life and negative symptoms.

**Discussion:** Treatment with new antipsychotics alone has only a limited impact on social cognition. A specific combined treatment of new antipsychotics and TAR leads to improved cognition and emotional performance with additional positive effects on functional outcome.