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“Pseudoneurotic Schizophrenia” Revisited: The role of obsessive-compulsive symptoms in low-level disorganization psychosis

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Objective Recent research has suggested a dual impact of obsessive-compulsive dimension on functioning in schizophrenia with a gradual transition from an improving to a worsening effect depending on obsessive-compulsive symptom (OCS) severity (from mild to moderate-severe). Aim of the present study was to investigate whether this varying effect of OCS on functioning might be mediated or moderated by schizophrenia symptom dimensions or occur independently.

Method Seventy-five patients affected by schizophrenia were administered the SCID-IV, the PANSS, the YBOCS and the SOFAS. The sample was divided into two groups according to the severity of OCS (absent/mild and moderate/high).

Results In both groups, a significant interaction between OCS and disorganization dimension was found: the dual effect of OCS on functioning occurred only among patients with low disorganization symptoms while it was no more apparent at higher levels of disorganization (Figure 1).

Conclusion Data suggest that in patients with schizophrenia, functioning at least in part depends on the interaction between disorganization and OCS. Particularly, mild OCS contributes to higher levels of functioning in patients with psychosis at low levels of disorganization. In keeping with the historical concept of “pseudoneurotic schizophrenia”, we speculate that obsessive dimension might have a pathoplastic influence in milder forms of schizophrenia spectrum disorders, balancing the effect of underlying low disorganization symptoms.

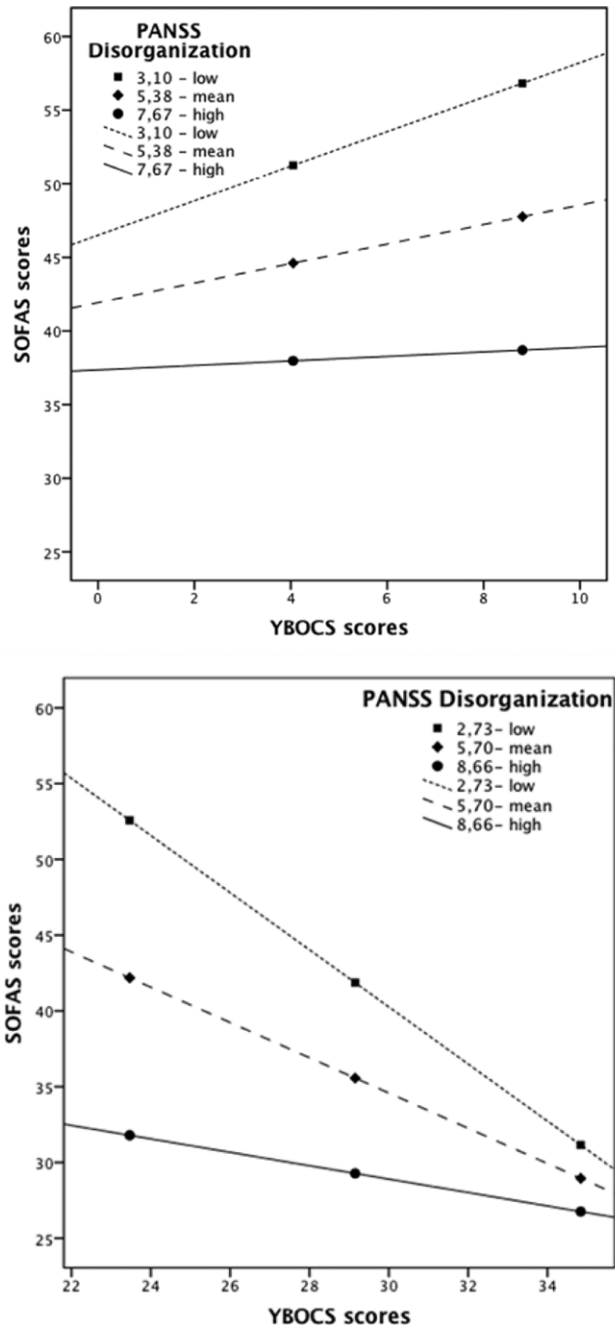


Fig. 1

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