

Conclusion: The dissemination of the EPA guidance papers may promote the development of shared guidelines concerning the assessment and treatment of cognitive functions in schizophrenia, with the purpose to improve the quality of care and to achieve clinical recovery in this population.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

WS021

Negative symptoms and social cognition as mediators of the relationship between neurocognition and functional outcome in schizophrenia

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Abstract: The presentation will summarize recent findings on the role of the two domains of negative symptoms (motivational impairment and expressive impairment) and social cognition as mediators of the impact of neurocognitive impairment on functional outcomes in people living with schizophrenia (PLWS).

One hundred and fifty subjects from 8 different European centers were recruited. Our data showed that the expressive impairment predicted global functioning and together with motivational impairment fully mediated the effects of neurocognition on the same outcome. Motivational impairment was a predictor of personal and social functioning and fully mediated neurocognitive impairment effects on the same outcome. Both motivational and neurocognitive impairments predicted socially useful activities, and the emotion recognition domain of social cognition partially mediated the impact of neurocognitive deficits on this outcome.

Our results indicate that pathways to functional outcomes are specific for different domains of real-life functioning and that negative symptoms and social cognition mediate the impact of neurocognitive impairment on different domains of functioning. Our results suggest that psychosocial interventions should target both negative symptoms and social cognition to enhance the functional impact of cognitive remediation.

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WS022

Assessing CIAS in clinical routine

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Abstract: Cognitive impairment associated with schizophrenia (CIAS) is a relevant problem and can be well assessed in different ways, as described in an EPA guidance paper (1). In routine clinical practice, the clinician usually relies on targeted questions to elicit psychopathological findings, as described in the AMDP system (2), for example. If there is a need for a more precise assessment of cognitive dysfunction, also in a transdiagnostic way, the Screen for Cognitive Impairment in Psychiatry (SCIP) (3) has recently been used by several working groups.

In a recent pilot study (4), we used the German version of the SCIP (SCIP-G) (5,6) to assess cognitive impairment in acute psychiatric inpatients diagnosed with psychotic disorders, bipolar disorder and depression.

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(2) The AMDP System: Manual for Assessment and Documentation of Psychopathology in Psychiatry, 9th edition. 2017. Ed.: Broome MR, Bottlender R, Rösler M, Michael; Stieglitz RD. Hogrefe Publishing GmbH. ISBN: 978-0-88-937542-0

(3) Purdon SE. The Screen for Cognitive Impairment in Psychiatry (SCIP): Instructions and three alternate forms. 2005. PNL Inc, Edmonton, Alberta

(4) Maihofer EIJ, Sachs G, Erfurth A. Cognitive Function in Patients with Psychotic and Affective Disorders: Effects of Combining Pharmacotherapy with Cognitive Remediation. *J Clin Med*. 2024 Aug 16;13(16):4843. doi: 10.3390/jcm13164843.

(5) Sachs G, Lasser I, Purdon SE, Erfurth A. Screening for cognitive impairment in schizophrenia: Psychometric properties of the German version of the Screen for Cognitive Impairment in Psychiatry (SCIP-G). *Schizophr Res Cogn*. 2021 May 12;25:100197. doi: 10.1016/j.scog.2021.100197.

(6) Sachs G, Bannick G, Maihofer EIJ, Voracek M, Purdon SE, Erfurth A. Dimensionality analysis of the German version of the Screen for Cognitive Impairment in Psychiatry (SCIP-G). *Schizophr Res Cogn*. 2022 Jun 6;29:100259. doi: 10.1016/j.scog.2022.100259.

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WS023

The role of add-on strategies (cognitive enhancers, cognitive remediation)

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Abstract: Cognitive impairments are present from the first manifestations of the disorder, including social cognition in individuals at ultra-high risk for psychosis (UHR). While advances in psychopharmacology in recent decades have significantly altered the course of the illness, antipsychotic therapy is more effective in treating positive symptoms than negative symptoms, comorbid depression, and cognitive and social cognitive dysfunction. Again, cognitive impairment has a significant impact on functional outcome, more so than symptom severity.

Due to the particular significance of cognitive deficits, it is very important to identify them accurately at an early stage. Strategies for identifying cognitive deficits are presented in an EPA guidance paper. To improve cognition in patients with schizophrenia, it has been suggested to combine pharmacotherapy with neuropsychological training. A meta-analysis showed the positive effect of cognitive remediation programmes in schizophrenia. While the strategies available today for the treatment of cognitive dysfunction are useful and should be implemented, it is hoped that pharmacological add-on strategies will come onto the market to have a greater effect on cognitive impairments.

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WS024

Crisis support in practice

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Abstract: An experienced practitioner describes the fundamentals of crisis support and Psychological First Aid – the knowledge base for the ongoing work in Västra Götalandsregionen, Sweden, using VR to practice crisis support. How is crisis support defined and what is the difference between crisis support and psychological treatment? What is the aim of crisis support? The presentation includes current knowledge about how humans react in a crisis, in the acute phase as well as in the longer term. What are the guidelines for providing Psychological First Aid and how can we implement them in practice?

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

WS025

Crisis Support VR: Bridging the Gap in Psychological First Aid Training -from initial idea to real virtual training

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Abstract: This presentation will explore the development and implementation of the Crisis Support VR project, funded by the VGR Innovation Fund and involving five hospitals and primary care. In today's society, the need for crisis support is more pressing than ever. However, we identified a significant gap in opportunities to practice Psychological First Aid. To address this, Region Västra Götaland collaborated with VirtualSpeech to create a system that has been tested by hospital staff, emergency services, and crisis support teams. This presentation will detail the project's journey from its inception to its current state, highlighting the challenges and successes encountered along the way.

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WS026

Overview of Existing Research on Crisis-Support Training in Virtual Reality

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Abstract: This presentation will provide an overview of existing research on crisis-support training in virtual reality, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges of utilizing this training method. It will review current research trends in the field, identify gaps in knowledge, and propose directions for future research initiatives. Studies on crisis-support training that utilize a virtual reality training approach for professionals working with children and adolescents will also be presented.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

WS027

Attitudes towards generative-AI based Virtual patient systems in crisis support training

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Abstract: While generative AI (genAI) has made significant advances, millions of people are facing humanitarian crises, resulting in the denial of their basic human rights. One humanitarian response to addressing humanitarian crises is crisis support teams with knowledge of psychological first aid (PFA). In humanitarian crises, skilled practice in PFA by crisis support teams can strengthen the mental health of affected individuals, which can be crucial to ensuring societal well-being. At the same time, there are major challenges in training crisis support teams in PFA. With advancements in genAI, there are opportunities to develop virtual patient systems to enhance PFA training for crisis support teams. This presentation will share preliminary data collected through the genAI-agents survey, which explores technological openness, attitudes and learning through genAI and genAI-based virtual patient systems in healthcare education as well as specifically targeted questions to the genAI-based VP system Crisis Support-VR. This survey is a part of a larger project focusing a central research question Does Crisis Support-VR enhance the skills and ability of crisis support teams to deliver effective PFA, thereby strengthening the mental health of individuals affected by humanitarian crises with two interconnected sub-goals; • to empirically explore health and medical staff within children, youth and adult services learning in Crisis Support-VR, • to develop an educational module for training and practice opportunities in PFA to support and help national and international organizations train crisis support teams in applying PFA to children, youths and adults affected by humanitarian crises.