

a computer screen. The participant was then asked to react to the latter word on the screen and categorize it as either positive or negative.

Results: A supraliminal affective priming effect was observed both in the experimental and the control group. (bigger effect in the experimental group). Patients with schizophrenia were more depressive than healthy participants. The priming effect in the experimental group was stronger for negative than for positive stimuli. In the group of patients treated with risperidon, the priming effect was statistically significant only for negative stimuli.

P043

Effects of cigarette smoking on cognitive deficits in first-episode psychosis

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Cognitive deficits have been consistently described in psychosis and have been proposed as endophenotype markers. Nicotine administration can improve attentional and working memory deficits in schizophrenia. Compared to the general population, smoking is specially prevalent in schizophrenia.

Aims: To describe possible differences in cognitive performance in smoking versus non-smoking patients with first-episode psychosis and to determine the presence of smoking-related cognitive enhancement.

Methods: Sixty-two patients with first-episode psychosis were assessed with a neuropsychological battery that included computerized measurements of attention, working memory, and executive functioning. Patients were grouped into two categories: non-smokers (0 cigarettes/day; n=31) and smokers (20 or more cigarettes/day; n=31).

Results: Groups were paired for sociodemographic and clinical data. In the sustained attention task, smokers exhibited shorter reaction times than non-smokers (p=0.026) and presented a significantly lower % of omissions (p=0.046). No differences were found in the % of commissions. Similarly, in the working memory task, smokers exhibited shorter reaction times than non-smokers (p=0.020) and presented a significantly lower % of omissions (p=0.002), with no differences in the % of commissions. Compared to non-smokers, smokers needed significantly less time to complete the Stroop interference task (p=0.013) with no significant differences in the % of correct responses. No differences were detected between groups in the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test.

Conclusions: Cigarette smoking is associated with less marked attentional and working memory deficits in first-episode psychosis and may constitute a self-medication behavior for remediation of neuropsychological dysfunction. This may be relevant for developing new pharmacotherapies for cognitive deficits in psychosis.

P044

Open-label assessment of the long-term tolerability, safety, and efficacy of sertindole in patients with schizophrenia

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Objective: The primary objective was to assess the long-term tolerability of sertindole.

Methods: An open-label, flexible-dose, 6 to 18 month study sertindole was conducted at 68 European centres. Patients had a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia (DSM-III-R), and had previously completed an 8-week sertindole/haloperidol comparative study. The long-term tolerability of sertindole was assessed as the proportion of patients reporting an AE judged to be possibly or probably related to sertindole treatment and laboratory parameters, vital signs, and ECG. Long-term response to treatment was evaluated using PANSS and CGI-S.

Results: 295 patients entered the study. 56% of patients received 16 mg sertindole. 151 patients completed at least 6 months of treatment. 85 patients withdrew prematurely; withdrawal of informed consent (n=37), lack of efficacy (n=23), and AEs (n=6). 243 patients reported AEs during the study. The most frequent AEs were: asthenia (16%), decreased ejaculatory volume (14%) and metabolic disorder/weight gain (12%). No statistically significant changes in laboratory values or vital signs were observed. Sertindole treatment was associated with a reduction in prolactin, the QTc interval was increased in the 8-week study and decreased over time during the extension study. There was a further treatment-related improvement from the acute study baseline in total PANSS and component subscale scores and CGI-S score. **Conclusions:** The effective dose for most patients was 16 mg/day. The tolerability profile of sertindole was similar to that seen in earlier studies. The low withdrawal rate due to AEs (2%), indicates that sertindole is well tolerated beyond acute treatment.

P045

Childhood behavioral and psychological characteristics in schizophrenia - a questionnaire-based retrospective study

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Background and aims: Childhood behavioral characteristics have not been fully investigated in patients with schizophrenia. To elucidate the picture of them, and to find out indicators which predict later development of schizophrenia, childhood behaviors of the adult schizophrenia subjects were investigated in a questionnaire-based retrospective study.

Population and Methods: Twenty-five schizophrenia outpatients in his/her twenties and normal healthy subjects (n = 100) were investigated. All patients are diagnosed according to DSM-IV-TR as schizophrenia, and who presents now mainly negative symptoms after passing an acute stage. By modified use of the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) as a retrospective assessment questionnaire, the parents of the patients and of control subjects rated their childhood behavior.

Results: Among eight subscales of the CBCL, those of Withdrawal, Depression/Anxiety, Social Problems, and Attention Problems were significantly associated with schizophrenia, although any of these scores were not in clinical range. A discriminant analysis using all items of CBCL correctly classified 96.5% of the population. Notable in an item-level analysis was an extremely attenuated aggression in personal relations in the schizophrenia subjects.

Conclusions: It was suggested that subclinical behavioral and psychological characteristics of schizophrenia already exist in the patients' childhood, among which lack of aggressive behaviors might be one of the core features.