

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue features papers using functional imaging in psychiatric disorders linked with neuropsychology to explore underlying brain systems, together with other neuropsychological papers, and a related Invited Review by Nelson *et al.* (pp. 163–174) on neural changes which may underlie the developmental social changes of adolescence. Three papers deal with psychiatric disorders in childhood and adolescence. Two further papers report studies of suicidal behaviours and of depression. An additional paper from Barrett *et al.* (pp. 281–293) describes the prevalence and features of schizophrenia in an unusual cultural population isolate, the Iban of Sarawak.

Functional imaging in psychiatric disorders

Three research papers make use of functional imaging in relation to memory. Veltman *et al.* (pp. 175–185) employ functional MRI during memory tasks in subjects high and low on dissociation scale scores, and find both groups use similar neural networks but with some differences and findings implying greater recruitment to these networks. Mendrek *et al.* (pp. 187–196) also use functional MRI, during working memory tasks and report underactivation in schizophrenics compared with controls in areas previously found to be dysfunctional in schizophrenics, together with overactivations in regions which may reflect compensatory mechanisms or increased effort. Chen *et al.* (pp. 197–204), employing memory tasks and measuring dopamine D2/D3 receptor density by single photon emission computed tomography, find receptor densities in the striatum to decline with age, as do verbal delayed recall and working memory, with the association between memory and receptor density remaining significant even after controlling for age, implying an important role for dopamine systems in memory.

Memory functions in psychiatric disorders

Two further neuropsychological papers deal with memory in psychiatric disorders. Kiesepä *et al.* (pp. 205–215) find impairment of all memory tests examined in euthymic bipolar subjects, but not co-twins, compared with normal controls. Female co-twins also show some impairment in verbal memory and learning, possibly pointing to genetic factors. Aartsen *et al.* (pp. 217–226) in a prospective study in older adults, find those who lose a spouse by death to show greater decline on an auditory verbal learning test over 6 years than those who do not, with little association with physical health or depression, indicating an independent effect.

Adolescence and adulthood

Three papers link adolescence and adulthood. Goodwin *et al.* (pp. 227–235) report data from a prospective cohort study. Panic attacks in adolescence were found predictive of personality disorders in young adulthood, across a wide range. Delorme *et al.* (pp. 237–243) examine age of onset in obsessive-compulsive disorder and find two groups: one with mean age of 11 years, associated with increased frequency of Tourette's syndrome and family history of OCD; the other with onset in adulthood and increased prevalence of major depressive and generalized anxiety disorders. Kessler *et al.* (pp. 245–256) describe a new short screening scale for the adult variant of a common childhood disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Suicidal behaviours and depression

Jenkins *et al.* (pp. 257–269) report a major study of an important problem in UK prisons, suicidal behaviours. They report raised rates and associations with demographic factors, social adversity and psychiatric disorders similar to those found in the general population, arguing that these need

to be addressed if rates are to be reduced. Simon *et al.* (pp. 271–279) report a follow-up study of patients with chronic medical illness and depression. They find significant improvements in mood, social and emotional functioning and disability after initiation of depression treatment. Their data suggest that in this circumstance depression is a stronger determinant of disability than is stable chronic medical illness.