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Facial Affect Recognition and Social Functioning Among Individuals with Varying Degrees of Schizotypy

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Abstract

Facial affect recognition (FAR) accuracy is impaired in schizophrenia and, to a lesser extent, in individuals at-risk for psychosis. Reduced reaction time and negative bias on FAR tasks are also evident in schizophrenia, though few studies have examined these measures in at-risk samples. Social dysfunction is associated with FAR deficits in schizophrenia and at-risk individuals. We aimed to elucidate the nature of FAR and social functioning among individuals from a non-clinical population reporting a range of schizotypal traits (i.e., risk for psychosis), and to examine whether FAR mediates the relationship between schizotypal traits and social functioning. Participants completed self-report measures assessing schizotypal traits and social functioning, and a computerized FAR task remotely via the Internet. High schizotypy individuals performed significantly worse than low schizotypy individuals on FAR total and neutral accuracy, demonstrated a negative bias, and reported significantly worse social functioning. Schizotypal traits were also negatively correlated with FAR performance and social functioning in the total sample. FAR accuracy did not mediate the direct relationship between schizotypal traits and

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