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Social motivation in people with recent-onset schizophrenia spectrum disorders

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### Abstract

People with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (SSD) often experience impairments in non-social motivation. In this study, we extended this line of investigation by examining specific components of social motivation and the extent to which these components work together in people with and without a recent-onset SSD. Sixty-four people with a recent-onset SSD and 26 controls completed a task that allowed us to examine changes in anticipated pleasure, decisions to trust, and effort expenditure over the course of repeated interactions with positive or negative outcomes. Compared to controls, we found that people in the SSD group placed less trust, tended to anticipate less pleasure, and expended less effort to increase the likelihood of future interactions with positive outcomes. Further, in the SSD group, effort expenditure was not associated with either anticipated pleasure or decisions to trust. While there were no group differences in anticipated pleasure or trust placed during interactions with negative outcomes, people in the SSD group expended less effort to decrease to the likelihood of future interactions. Taken together, our findings suggest that people with a recent-onset SSD may experience both impairment and disconnection between various components of social motivation for interactions with positive outcomes. Implications for interventions for social engagement in people with SSD are discussed.

Keywords: schizophrenia; motivation; social interaction; anticipated pleasure; reward learning; effort expenditure

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