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Social anxiety and risk factors in patients with schizophrenia: Relationship with duration of untreated psychosis

Sayaka Aikawa^a, Hiroyuki Kobayashi^{a,b}, Takahiro Nemoto^{a,*}, Satoshi Matsuo^b, Yo Wada^a, Noriyuki Mamiya^b, Taiju Yamaguchi^a, Naoyuki Katagiri^a, Naohisa Tsujino^a, Masafumi Mizuno^a

^aDepartment of Neuropsychiatry, Toho University School of Medicine, 6-11-1 Omori-nishi, Ota-ku, Tokyo 143-8541, Japan.

^bDepartment of Medical Affairs, Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Shinagawa Grand Central Tower, 2-16-4 Konan, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-8242, Japan.

*Corresponding author. Phone: (+81) 3 3762 4151. takahiro.nemoto@med.toho-u.ac.jp

Abstract:

Social anxiety is commonly reported as a comorbid condition among people with schizophrenia. The aims of this study were to elucidate the associations between demographic/clinical features and social anxiety. A total of 207 outpatients with schizophrenia underwent assessments for social anxiety, psychiatric symptoms, social cognition, cognitive function, social functioning, and quality of life (QOL). To confirm the prediction model for social anxiety, we conducted multiple linear regressions using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS) score as an outcome variable and demographic/clinical variables as predictors. Of the 207 patients, 30 (14.5%) met the criteria for social anxiety disorder and 109 (52.7%) had a mean LSAS score higher than 30, suggesting that their social anxiety symptoms had reached a clinical level. Social anxiety was significantly correlated with psychiatric symptoms, social functioning, and QOL, whereas significant correlations with social cognition and cognitive function were not observed. A multiple regression analysis identified social functioning, gender, age of onset, and duration of untreated psychosis (DUP) as predictors that were most closely associated with the LSAS score. We confirmed that social anxiety symptoms were highly prevalent among outpatients with schizophrenia and were closely associated with social functioning and DUP, rather than social cognitive impairments.

Keywords: psychosis; schizophrenia; social anxiety; social cognition

1. Introduction

Recovery is a possible, but still challenging, goal for most patients with schizophrenia (Harvey et al., 2012). In general, recovery requires the amelioration of psychotic symptoms, cognitive impairment, and social dysfunction (Andreasen et al.,

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