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Deficits of cognitive theory of mind and its relationship with functioning in individuals with an at-risk mental state and first-episode psychosis

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Abstract

Disturbance of theory of mind (ToM) and its relationship with functioning in schizophrenia is well documented; however, this is unclear in spectrum disorders like at-risk mental state (ARMS) and first-episode psychosis (FEP). To assess mental state reasoning ability, the total score of the Theory of Mind Picture Stories Task questionnaire was compared among 36 Japanese individuals with ARMS, 40 with FEP, and 25 healthy controls (HC). Pearson's correlations between ToM performance and global and social functioning indices were examined. ToM performance for FEP and ARMS subjects was significantly lower than that for HC, though the significance of the difference between the ARMS and HC disappeared when controlling for premorbid IQ. ToM deficits in ARMS subjects were confirmed only in the comprehension of higher-order false belief. Only among FEP subjects were ToM performance and global functioning significantly correlated, though the significance disappeared when controlling for neurocognitive performance or dose of antipsychotics. No significant correlation between ToM performance and social functioning was observed in the FEP and ARMS groups. The current findings suggest that ToM deficits emerge in ARMS subjects confined within a higher-order domain, and that the

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