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Life events in schizoaffective disorder: a systematic review

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Abstract**Background**

Life events play a central role in the development of psychiatric disorders and impact course and outcome. We present a systematic review of the literature on the relationship of life events with the onset and long term course of schizoaffective disorder.

Methods

MEDLINE was searched with the combination of the key words: 'life events' plus 'schizoaffective'. The PRISMA method was followed in the review process.

Results

From the identified 66 papers only 12 were considered to be of relevance to the current study and 6 more papers were identified by inspecting the reference lists of the identified papers.

Limitations

There are very few studies focusing on the role of life events in schizoaffective disorder indicating insufficient data concerning the relationship of life events with onset and long-term course of schizoaffective disorder. Reported effects are not generic but concern specific events like the loss of mother, and females seem to be more vulnerable. Patients with schizoaffective disorder manifest high rates of PTSD.

Conclusion

The literature on life events with the development and course of schizoaffective disorder is limited and precludes solid conclusions.

Keywords

Life events, psychosis, risk factors, schizoaffective disorder, stress

Background

Differentiating between psychotic disorders is difficult both at the theoretical and the clinical level. Schizoaffective disorder, introduced for the first time in an operationalized way by the DSM-III, is considered to be a psychotic disorder, positioned in-between schizophrenia to mood disorders. It is

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