

Relational memory in early psychosis

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Relational memory—the ability to form contextual relationships between individual items—is impaired in chronic schizophrenia and has been linked to hippocampal dysfunction. Whether relational memory impairment exists in early-stage psychosis and progresses with disease is unclear.

Suzanne Avery, Ph.D., and colleagues studied [eye movements](#) as an implicit measure of relational memory in early-stage psychosis patients and healthy counterparts. Participants viewed face-scene pairs and were instructed to remember which face was paired with each background scene. Participants were then shown background scenes with three [faces](#) overlaid and asked to identify which face was previously paired by focusing their eyes on the matching face.

Reported in *Schizophrenia Research*, the findings revealed healthy controls were more accurate in identifying previously seen pairs and rejecting unseen pairings. Preferential viewing of the matching face took longer in early psychosis patients and never reached the same magnitude as in healthy control subjects.

The results indicate a partial but not complete deficit of relational memory in early psychosis patients.

More information: Suzanne N. Avery et al. Impaired relational memory in the early stage of psychosis, *Schizophrenia Research* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.schres.2019.07.060](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2019.07.060)

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