

Recognition of fear, anger impaired in psychosis patients

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Patients with first-episode psychosis (FEP) have a worse ability to

recognize fear and anger, according to a study recently published in *Schizophrenia Bulletin*.

Giada Tripoli, from the University of Palermo in Italy, and colleagues examined global and specific facial emotion recognition deficits in FEP and the potential association between polygenic liability to [psychotic disorders](#) and facial emotion recognition. A total of 828 patients with FEP and 1,308 controls completed assessments of the Degraded Facial Affect Recognition Task. In addition, DNA was extracted from a blood or saliva sample from a subset of 524 FEP patients and 899 controls, and polygenic risk scores for schizophrenia, [bipolar disorder](#), and [major depressive disorder](#) were computed.

The researchers found that compared with controls, patients had a worse ability to globally recognize facial emotion expressions, with evidence for stronger effects on [negative emotions](#) and anger than on happiness. Facial anger recognition was significantly associated with the schizophrenia polygenic risk score in a pooled analysis and controlling for confounders.

"Our results indicate a predominantly negative emotion facial recognition impairment in early psychosis, mainly involving fear and anger," the authors write. "Additionally, our findings provide further evidence to consider angry emotion recognition as an intermediate phenotype for psychosis, shedding light on specific emotion identification ability associated with common genetic risk variants for schizophrenia."

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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