

Age-linked performance on social cognitive tests explored in psychosis

June 20 2023, by Elana Gotkine



Different age-related performance patterns are seen on tests of emotion

perception and processing (EPP) and theory of mind (ToM) in individuals with psychotic disorders and controls, according to a study published online May 21 in *Schizophrenia Bulletin*.

Eva Velthorst, Ph.D., from "GGZ Noord-Holland-Noord" in Heerhugowaard, Netherlands, and colleagues examined the performance of the social cognitive tests EPP and ToM among 905 individuals with a psychotic disorder, 966 unaffected siblings, and 544 never-psychotic controls aged 18 to 55 years.

The researchers found that EPP performance was associated with age across groups, with worse performance observed for older versus younger participants. A significant group-by-age interaction was seen on ToM, with [older patients](#) performing better than [younger patients](#), while in siblings and controls, there were no age-related differences in performance. The association between negative symptoms and ToM was stronger for younger than older individuals among patients with a psychotic disorder.

"Our results show that EPP and ToM impairment is associated with poorer interpersonal functioning both in younger and older patient groups but suggest that younger individuals might benefit particularly from support with ToM skills, whereas older individuals might be more likely to benefit from support with EPP skills," the authors write.

The infrastructure for the study was provided by funds from several [pharmaceutical companies](#).

More information: Eva Velthorst et al, Age-Related Social Cognitive Performance in Individuals With Psychotic Disorders and Their First-Degree Relatives, *Schizophrenia Bulletin* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/schbul/sbad069](#)

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Citation: Age-linked performance on social cognitive tests explored in psychosis (2023, June 20)
retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-06-age-linked-social-cognitive-explored-psychosis.html>

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