

## P02-11

### AFFECT RECOGNITION DEFICITS IN FIRST EPISODE SCHIZOPHRENIA AND IN SUBJECTS WITH ANXIETY DISORDERS: AN ERP STUDY

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**Aims:** Disturbances in affect recognition may be one of the most pervasive and serious aspects of the schizophrenic patient's interpersonal problems. Many of the studies used chronic patients, and therefore present difficulties in interpretation of results, due to the confounding influence of institutionalization, length of disease, cognitive deficits, and positive symptoms. If emotion recognition deficits are a core feature of schizophrenia, they should be apparent in a first-episode sample.

Aim of the study was to examine affect recognition deficits in first psychotic episode and in young suffering of anxiety disorders (using a case-control design) during event-related potentials (ERPs).

**Method:** Pictures from Ekman and Friesen series has been used in an ERPs study to investigate the neurophysiological correlates of the emotional processing of fear and happiness in patients with first episode (N°12) and in patients (N°12) with anxiety disorders versus healthy subjects. The three groups were compared using a visual *oddball* design.

**Results:** Significant differences between groups in ERP components, the P100, N170, and N250 latency and amplitude differences for target stimuli faces were found. Significant differences were also observed in amplitude between positive and negative expression. First episode schizophrenic patients showed reduced amplitude in front of positive vs. negative stimuli. Anxious subjects did not show amplitude difference between the two kinds of emotional stimuli.

**Conclusion:** We can hypothesized that subjects with first-episode show specific altered patterns of cognitive effort in the perception of different emotional stimuli compared to normal controls and subjects affected by anxiety disorders.