

TEMPERAMENT IN INDIVIDUALS WITH PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS BEFORE AND AFTER THE ONSET OF ILLNESS

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Introduction: The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) is used to measure novelty seeking (NS), harm avoidance (HA), reward dependence (RD), and persistence (P).

Objectives: We will study temperament in individuals with psychosis and healthy controls.

Aim: We aim to study the stability of temperament in individuals with psychotic disorders (with onset of illness before and after first follow-up) and in healthy controls.

Methods: As part of the 31-year follow-up survey of the prospective population based Northern Finland 1966 Birth Cohort, the TCI was filled by a large sample of individuals. A subsample of psychotic individuals, with the onset of illness before (n=16) or after (n=15) the 31-year follow-up, and healthy controls (n=117) filled in these scales again at the age of 43. We studied also the association between psychotic symptoms and premorbid temperament.

Results: The 31-year and 43-year temperament scores correlated strongly among controls (Pearson's r: NS 0.68, HA 0.60, RD 0.56, P 0.54), whereas correlations among psychotic individuals with the onset of psychosis before first follow-up were weaker (NS 0.38, HA 0.50, RD 0.17, P 0.53). High HA before the onset of illness (at age of 31 years) associated significantly with a lower likelihood of remission and with more negative, disorganization and total symptoms in the PANSS. High NS before illness associated with a higher likelihood of remission according to the PANSS.

Conclusions: Temperament was stable among controls, and more unstable in individuals with psychoses. Premorbid harm avoidance and novelty seeking predicts the clinical outcome in schizophrenia.