

The relationship between dimensions of insight, positive and negative symptoms in schizophrenia and information processing capacity during an everyday shopping task.

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Introduction

It has been reported that lack of insight is significantly associated with cognitive disturbance, psychopathology and functional outcomes in schizophrenia. Deficits in information processing strategies that support executive function are thought to contribute to a reduction of both insight and function in schizophrenia. First, processes which include the ability to set and keep goals in mind, and allocate limited attention resources during task performance, and second, processes that are those involved in the ongoing evaluation of performance. Some researchers suggest it is probable that the same cognitive difficulty that supports lack of insight is also responsible for difficulties with the day to day capacity to plan, question, analyse and make judgements about one's own performance during complex everyday tasks. To date, there is no study that examines the relationship between cognitive capacity as it is applied to a complex community task, schizophrenia psychopathology, and insight.

Objective

To examine the relationship between dimensions of insight, positive and negative symptoms and information processing capacity during an everyday shopping task.

Methods

A descriptive, correlation design was used to study 23 young adults with first onset schizophrenia, and schizoaffective disorder. They were rated on a functional measure of task embedded cognition during a shopping task (the Perceive, Recall, Plan and Perform (PRPP) System of Task Analysis), the Scale for the Assessment of Positive Symptoms (SAPS), the Scale for the Assessment of Negative Symptoms (SANS) and the Schedule for Assessing Insight-Extended (SAI-E).

Results and conclusion

Deficits ranging from mild to severe were found in all measures used. Results suggest that cognitive function during task performance is significantly related to clinical measures of schizophrenic psychopathology and insight in this first episode group.

Contribution to practice

The desired outcome of occupational therapy is better occupational coherence. Occupational coherence is characterized by organized and insightful thinking. It is supported by the capacity to engage in the cognitive processes required for self organization, self appraisal and decision making. The findings of this study suggest how occupational therapists can assess the coherence of functional performance and the neurocognitive capacity that supports coherent thinking, thereby obtaining a better understanding of complex task performance.