

remission, improve social functioning and the quality of life in schizophrenia patients, despite the active pathological process in brain.

**Keywords:** schizofrenia; Psychosocial rehabilitation; inflammatory and autoimmune markers

### EPP1133

#### The efficacy of social skills training in the treatment of schizophrenia

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**Introduction:** Social cognition and skill deficits have been largely documented in subjects with schizophrenia (SCZs), and have a strong influence on the functional outcome of these subjects. Different behavioural interventions have been developed to target and improve social skills in SCZs. For instance, the Social Skills Training (SST) focuses on improving communication skills and assertiveness to facilitate disease management, independent living and real-life functioning of SCZs. SST seems also to have an impact on negative symptoms and social cognition.

**Objectives:** The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of SST in improving social cognition and negative symptoms in SCZs.

**Methods:** The sample included 8 chronic SCZs (age between 18 and 60), who completed 6 months of SST. The intervention consisted of two weekly group sessions of 2 hours each. We assessed psychopathology, neurocognition, real-life functioning, functional capacity and social cognition at baseline and after training. Paired samples t-tests were performed to evaluate the differences of the variables considered after completing the treatment.

**Results:** Significant improvements in negative symptoms ( $p < .05$ ), social cognition ( $p < .05$ ), functional capacity ( $p < .001$ ), activities of daily living ( $p < .001$ ) and interpersonal relationships ( $p < .011$ ) were found.

**Conclusions:** The present findings suggest that SST might ameliorate social cognition and negative symptoms which are generally not influenced by antipsychotic treatment. The integration of pharmacological and SST interventions might have an impact on major determinants of poor real-life functioning in SCZs.

**Keywords:** social skills training; schizofrenia; psychiatric rehabilitation; social cognition

### EPP1134

#### Effectiveness of social skills training conducted in a group of subjects with first-episode psychosis

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**Introduction:** Cognitive deficits are considered a key feature of schizophrenia due to their substantial influence on the psychosocial outcome of subjects affected by this disorder. Several studies showed that moderate to severe cognitive impairments, including dysfunctions of social cognition, are already present during the early phases of the illness, in subjects with first-episode psychosis (FEPs). Psychosocial interventions, such as social skill training (SST), could therefore be implemented already upon occurrence of the first episode of psychosis to improve the overall functional outcome of schizophrenia, which represents to date an unmet need in the care of these patients.

**Objectives:** The study aims to evaluate the use of SST to enhance social skills and real-life functioning in FEPs.

**Methods:** The sample included 7 FEPs (age between 15 and 40). The SST intervention included 30 sessions lasting 2 hours and delivered twice a week. Psychopathology, neurocognition, real life functioning, functional capacity and social cognition were assessed at baseline and after training. Paired samples t-tests were performed to evaluate the effects of the intervention. All subjects were treated with second generation antipsychotics.

**Results:** Significant improvements were observed in negative symptoms, social cognition, problem solving skills, as well as in global functioning (all  $p < .05$ ). Within real-life functioning, the improvement was greater for the domain of interpersonal relationships.

**Conclusions:** These preliminary findings suggest that SST might complement pharmacological treatment in FEPs to improve functional outcome in these subjects. Further studies with a higher sample size and a longer follow-up are required in order to confirm the present results.

**Keywords:** social skills training; schizofrenia; psychiatric rehabilitation; first episode of psychosis

### EPP1136

#### Stigmatisation of schizophrenia, psychosis and autism in flemish newspapers

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**Introduction:** Stigma is a major burden and impediment for treatment and recovery in serious mental disorders, especially psychotic disorders. Therefore, it has been proposed to replace the term schizophrenia by psychosis susceptibility or psychosis spectrum disorder.

**Objectives:** We have assessed stigma in the media through a 10-year survey of Flemish daily newspapers (2008-2017) by comparing the way schizophrenia and autism are portrayed. We added the term psychosis for the years 2013-17 to assess its suitability as a less stigmatising alternative.

**Methods:** Via the websites of the seven Flemish newspapers, we searched for all articles published between 01 Jan 2008 and 31 Dec 2017 containing the keywords autism, schizophrenia, and related terms. The collected articles ( $n = 5,337$ ) were then graded to their stigmatising content. We added the term psychosis for the years 2013-17.

**Results:** In the collected articles the coverage of autism was mostly positive, whereas the coverage of schizophrenia was predominantly negative. The contrast was very substantial ( $p < 0.0001$ ) and stable