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Context Matters: Social Cognition Task Performance in Psychometric Schizotypes
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Abstract

Patients with schizophrenia show performance deficits on tasks requiring empathy-related social cognition. The extent to which empathy impairments are observed in psychometric schizotypy is unclear. We compared accuracy and reaction time in three groups of individuals characterized by positive schizotypy ($n = 79$), negative schizotypy ($n = 123$), or low schizotypy group ($n = 137$). On a social cognition task that provided context, namely, the Emotion Perspective Taking Task, the positive schizotypes showed poorer performance than the negative schizotypy and control groups. These results suggest that some schizotypes differ in their ability to make use of context (e.g., social cues from the environment) to affect their social cognitive performance. However, on the Affective Responsiveness Task, in which no context was given, both groups of psychometric schizotypes displayed lower performance than the controls. These findings highlight the importance of assessing multiple groups of schizotypes as well as the value of including several social cognition tasks in order to reveal relative performance deficits.

161 words

Keywords. Empathy. Schizotypy. Social anhedonia. Affective responsiveness task.

Emotion perspective taking. Schizophrenia.

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