Social cognition and functioning in schizophrenia: an exploratory study with Portuguese outpatients

Nuno Rocha¹², Cristina Queirós², Ana Gouveia¹, Andreia Silva¹, Cláudia Soares¹, Ana Ribeiro Bravo¹
1 – Porto Polytechnic Institute – Health School
2 – University of Porto: Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Schizophrenia is a mental illness associated with impaired social cognition. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that deficits in social cognition contribute to disability and poor quality of life. The aim of the present study was to examine the associations between several domains of social cognition and psychosocial functioning in schizophrenia. The sample consisted of 30 Portuguese outpatients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. The participants completed an assessment procedure that included measures of emotion recognition (Facial Emotion Identification Test), theory of mind (Corcoran Hinting Task), attributional style (Ambiguous Intentions Hostility Questionnaire), jumping to conclusions (Fish Task), managing emotions (MSCEIT-Managing Emotions Branch), social perception (Social Perception Scale) and executive functioning and processing speed (Trail Making Test A and B). Psychosocial function was assessed with the Portuguese version of the Life Skills Profile. Several social cognitive measures were correlated with the Life Skills Profile domains related to communication ability and social interaction. These results suggest an important contribution of social cognition in the psychosocial functioning of people with schizophrenia and encourage the development of specific programs intended to remediate impairments in social cognition to improve better functional outcomes.