Self-Awareness Therapy (SAT) for Schizophrenic Patients

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Objective

The present study evaluates the effect of Self-Awareness Therapy (SAT), a cognitive and behavioral intervention on AM, the autobiographic awareness and the capacity to imagine oneself in the future, in schizophrenia patients.

Method

The SAT proposed different tasks during 2 x 13:30 on 10 weeks to patients:
- a journal where they noted an event that took place the day before;
- an agenda where they noted an event that took place the day after;
- The execution of an individual and group projects;
- Exercises to become better knew ("Who am I?").

To date, 9 patients were participated in any SAT and completed all the tests before and after therapy.

A battery of measurements were used before and after SAT.

1. The TEMPau (Piolino, 2000) measure the autobiographical memory and autonoetic awareness on four life periods: age 5, 10, 15, 20–30, after 30 years and past 12 months across three different themes: meaning of important events in the life of the person, a person to a friend, a family or a friend.

2. TeMA (Neumann and Philippot, unpublished) measure the projection into the future. Participants were asked to generate personal events that could occur to them in the future in response to ten cue words

3. Neuropsychological measures:
   - Digit Span Forwards and Backwards (Wechsler, 1997);
   - Stroop: Color-Word Test (Grigor, 1935);
   - Verbal Fluency Task (Benton & Hamsher, 1976).

4. Depression and Anxiety symptoms:
   - Beck Depression Inventory II (Beck, 1996);
   - State and Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983)

Results

1. The analyses revealed a significant difference between before and after SAT on the TEMPau scores:
   - Patients reported more specific past memories and less general past memories after than before the SAT (t(8)=3.62, p=.006, t(8)=3.41, p=.009, respectively)
   - Patients reported more "REMEMBER" responses related to specific memories recall after than before the SAT (t(8)=2.78, p=.024).

2. The analysis did not reveal any difference between between and after SAT on TeMA, neuropsychological and affective measures.

Discussion

- These results are in line with previous one (Blairy et al., 2008) and support the notion that, in schizophrenia the retrieving of past specific memories can be improved as well as the associated autonoetic awareness.
- It is important to note that the level of anxiety and depression symptoms do not increased after SAT despite a mental time travel (recovering past and future specific events) not always pleasant for these patients.
- Validation of the therapy is still ongoing. Given these encouraging preliminary results, we are optimistic about the improvement of better self awareness, and therefore a better quality of life in these schizophrenia patients.