

## Schizotypy and social skills: performance versus distress

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Among the clinical manifestations of schizophrenia, significant impairments in social functioning have been consistently reported. More specifically, social isolation, impairments in social competence, deterioration in interpersonal close relationships and communication-deficits are recognized as characteristics frequently displayed by patients. According to the continuum hypothesis, subjects from a nonclinical population with a biological-genetic liability to schizophrenia may to some degree show impairments similar to patients. A liability to schizophrenia may be expressed as schizotypal personality traits, such as referential thinking. The aim of our study was to examine the relationship between schizotypal personality traits and social skills in a nonclinical, nonstudent sample from the general population

The schizotypal personality questionnaire (SPQ) was used for assessing schizotypal traits on the positive, negative and desorganised dimensions. Social skills were evaluated using the scale for interpersonal behavior (SIB). The SIB measures the frequency of engagement in specific social behaviors as well as the experienced distress it is accompanied by. Forty subjects from the general population completed the SPQ and the SIB. Mean age was 30.9 years (SD=8.9) and the male/female ratio was 7:3.

After bonferroni correction, frequency of specific social behaviors did not correlate with dimensions of schizotypy. However, distress during social behavior correlated significantly with the negative schizotypy dimension ( $r=0.67$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). All individual subscales of the SIB contributed significantly to this correlation.

These findings show that negative schizotypy is significantly related to distress during social interactions. We propose that healthy subjects scoring high on negative schizotypy may need more effort to survive in a social environment due to subtle deficits in cognitive-emotional processing and hence may be faced with discomfort in social interactions.

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Preferred poster session: Cognition and Behavior posters on friday, June 4