French Validation of the "reading the Mind in the Eyes Test" : Relation with Subclinical Psychotic Positive Symptoms in General Population

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Few tests are available to assess 'Theory of Mind' (ToM) abilities in adults in French. The objective of this study was to validate a ToM task, the 'Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test' (abbreviated below: 'RMET' [1]). The ToM belongs to social cognition processes, which have impacts on the everyday functioning of schizophrenic patients (in meta-analysis [2]) but also in bipolar disorder patients [3].

This test assesses the ToM with pictures of 'eye-region of the face', which express a mental state. The test was administered to 142 undergraduate students. The different validities were supported by the analyze of the relations between the RMET and a score at a Facial Emotion Recognition Test (FERT [4]; convergent validity) and between the former and the 'Mill-Hill vocabulary test' (Mill-Hill; a verbal intelligence test: divergent validity). A regression was computed to determine if the score at the RMET predicts better the life-time subclinical positive psychotic symptoms assessed with the CAPE-42 (CAPE) scale than other abilities.

The correlation between the RMET and the FERT are significant and the RMET did not correlate significantly with the Mill-Hill. The Beta coefficient of the score at the RMET is significant (β = -.27; t = -3.13; p = .002), whereas the FERT and the Mill-Hill Beta coefficients were not significant.

This French version of the RMET shows good convergent and divergent validities. Furthermore, the test shows better predictive value than the FERT and the Mill-Hill. The results demonstrate that the RMET presents sound predictive utility.