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SEX-RELATED DIFFERENCES IN SMELL IDENTIFICATION IN PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA, THEIR FIRST-DEGREE RELATIVES AND MATCHED HEALTHY CONTROLS

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Introduction: Sex-related differences in smell identification have been shown in healthy subjects, however, in patients with schizophrenia these findings are still controversial.

Objectives: We analyzed sex-related differences with respect to smell identification in patients with schizophrenia, their first-degree relatives and healthy controls.

Aims: To assess possible sex-related differences in smell identification.

Methods: The sample consisted of 51 patients with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (49% female; mean age 33.1 years; SD: 11), 21 first-degree relatives (61.9% female, age 49.5 years, SD 17.6, one affected, others non-affected) ; mean age 49.5 years; SD: 17.6) and 51 matched healthy controls (49% female; mean age 33 years; SD: 12.1). The Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) and the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (M.I.N.I.) were used to assess psychopathology and diagnosis, respectively. The University of Pennsylvania Smell Identification Test (UPSIT), a standardized, multiple- and forced-choice scratch- and sniff test consisting of 40 items, was administered to all subjects.

Results: We found no significant differences in smell identification between the three groups ($p=0.182$). Also, the female and male subgroups did not differ significantly in smell identification ($p=0.105$, $p=0.387$, respectively). The mean UPSIT scores were 34.4 (SD: 4.1) for healthy women (males: 33.2; SD: 3.5), 32.0 (SD: 5.1) for women with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (males: 32.5; SD: 4.4), and 34.5 (SD: 2.6) for female first-degree relatives (males: 30.5; SD: 2.8).

Conclusion: We found neither significant differences in smell identification in patients with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, their first-degree relatives or healthy controls, nor sex-related differences.