

remission, improve social functioning and the quality of life in schizophrenia patients, despite the active pathological process in brain.

**Keywords:** schizofrenia; Psychosocial rehabilitation; inflammatory and autoimmune markers

### EPP1133

#### The efficacy of social skills training in the treatment of schizophrenia

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**Introduction:** Social cognition and skill deficits have been largely documented in subjects with schizophrenia (SCZs), and have a strong influence on the functional outcome of these subjects. Different behavioural interventions have been developed to target and improve social skills in SCZs. For instance, the Social Skills Training (SST) focuses on improving communication skills and assertiveness to facilitate disease management, independent living and real-life functioning of SCZs. SST seems also to have an impact on negative symptoms and social cognition.

**Objectives:** The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of SST in improving social cognition and negative symptoms in SCZs.

**Methods:** The sample included 8 chronic SCZs (age between 18 and 60), who completed 6 months of SST. The intervention consisted of two weekly group sessions of 2 hours each. We assessed psychopathology, neurocognition, real-life functioning, functional capacity and social cognition at baseline and after training. Paired samples t-tests were performed to evaluate the differences of the variables considered after completing the treatment.

**Results:** Significant improvements in negative symptoms ( $p < .05$ ), social cognition ( $p < .05$ ), functional capacity ( $p < .001$ ), activities of daily living ( $p < .001$ ) and interpersonal relationships ( $p < .011$ ) were found.

**Conclusions:** The present findings suggest that SST might ameliorate social cognition and negative symptoms which are generally not influenced by antipsychotic treatment. The integration of pharmacological and SST interventions might have an impact on major determinants of poor real-life functioning in SCZs.

**Keywords:** social skills training; schizofrenia; psychiatric rehabilitation; social cognition

### EPP1134

#### Effectiveness of social skills training conducted in a group of subjects with first-episode psychosis

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**Introduction:** Cognitive deficits are considered a key feature of schizophrenia due to their substantial influence on the psychosocial outcome of subjects affected by this disorder. Several studies showed that moderate to severe cognitive impairments, including dysfunctions of social cognition, are already present during the early phases of the illness, in subjects with first-episode psychosis (FEPs). Psychosocial interventions, such as social skill training (SST), could therefore be implemented already upon occurrence of the first episode of psychosis to improve the overall functional outcome of schizophrenia, which represents to date an unmet need in the care of these patients.

**Objectives:** The study aims to evaluate the use of SST to enhance social skills and real-life functioning in FEPs.

**Methods:** The sample included 7 FEPs (age between 15 and 40). The SST intervention included 30 sessions lasting 2 hours and delivered twice a week. Psychopathology, neurocognition, real life functioning, functional capacity and social cognition were assessed at baseline and after training. Paired samples t-tests were performed to evaluate the effects of the intervention. All subjects were treated with second generation antipsychotics.

**Results:** Significant improvements were observed in negative symptoms, social cognition, problem solving skills, as well as in global functioning (all  $p < 0.05$ ). Within real-life functioning, the improvement was greater for the domain of interpersonal relationships.

**Conclusions:** These preliminary findings suggest that SST might complement pharmacological treatment in FEPs to improve functional outcome in these subjects. Further studies with a higher sample size and a longer follow-up are required in order to confirm the present results.

**Keywords:** social skills training; schizofrenia; psychiatric rehabilitation; first episode of psychosis

### EPP1136

#### Stigmatisation of schizophrenia, psychosis and autism in flemish newspapers

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**Introduction:** Stigma is a major burden and impediment for treatment and recovery in serious mental disorders, especially psychotic disorders. Therefore, it has been proposed to replace the term schizophrenia by psychosis susceptibility or psychosis spectrum disorder.

**Objectives:** We have assessed stigma in the media through a 10-year survey of Flemish daily newspapers (2008-2017) by comparing the way schizophrenia and autism are portrayed. We added the term psychosis for the years 2013-17 to assess its suitability as a less stigmatising alternative.

**Methods:** Via the websites of the seven Flemish newspapers, we searched for all articles published between 01 Jan 2008 and 31 Dec 2017 containing the keywords autism, schizophrenia, and related terms. The collected articles ( $n = 5,337$ ) were then graded to their stigmatising content. We added the term psychosis for the years 2013-17.

**Results:** In the collected articles the coverage of autism was mostly positive, whereas the coverage of schizophrenia was predominantly negative. The contrast was very substantial ( $p < 0.0001$ ) and stable

over the years. The portrayal of psychosis turned out to be mostly positive in the broadsheet newspapers and mostly negative in the tabloid papers.

**Conclusions:** The social stigma attached to schizophrenia and psychosis is poignantly reflected in the Flemish newspapers. The fact that a comparable disorder such as autism is depicted in a much more favourable way than schizophrenia indicates that a more positive image of schizophrenia is not only desirable but also achievable. Psychosis gives mixed results, a finding up for discussion.

**Keywords:** Stigma; psychosis; schizophrénia; autism

## EPP1137

### The effects of horticultural therapy on the functionality of psychotic patients employed in the green unit of the psychiatric hospital of Thessaloniki Greece

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**Introduction:** Horticultural therapy is used as alternative treatment option in rehabilitation programs for patients suffering from chronic mental disorders. In Greece, the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki was the first that organized a Rehabilitation Program approved by the Greek Ministry of Health, the “Green Unit - Monada Prasinou”.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of horticultural intervention on the functionality of patients employed in the Green Unit of the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki.

**Methods:** The Mini-ICF-APP Social Functioning Scale was used to evaluate the functionality of the patients. Horticulture therapy included actual gardening and other agricultural activities. The sample consisted of two groups, 22 inpatient of the Green Unit and 22 patients of outpatient units as a control group. The majority of the patients suffered from Schizophrenia spectrum disorders. Both patients’ groups were evaluated over 12 months (May 2018- May 2019).

**Results:** At baseline evaluation, the patients of the Green Unit patients presented higher scores only in the mobility and endurance subscale. A year later there was a statistically significant difference in all thirteen subscales. Shortly, the patients were rated as more consistent, organizational, social, flexible, responsible, more confident and enterprising, more adaptable and more able to take care of themselves.

**Conclusions:** The results suggest that horticulture as a therapeutic method had beneficial effects in all dimensions of patient functionality confirming the hypothesis that such programs should be a priority in the effort of psychosocial reintegration of patients suffering from chronic mental disorders.

**Keywords:** Horticultural therapy; Rehabilitation; Functionality; schizophrénia

## EPP1138

### Parent-child communication and inner dialogues in the self-awareness of children with disabilities

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**Introduction:** Analysis of problems arising in communication between parents and their children with disabilities is a part of biopsychological examination of disease.

**Objectives:** The study was aimed at exploring the parent-child communication in children suffering from chronic neurological disorders in order to organize the optimal psychological rehabilitation.

**Methods:** The study consisted of two stages: 1) CAT (Bellak) and drawing tests, performed by child; 2) experiment involving both parent and child, making up a story together (CAT-H, parallel to the task performed by the child). Parents filled in a questionnaire on their communication with the child; its results were compared to the situations of real communication. Other methods used included: observation, analysis of family situation and child’s development; coding of communicative elements; analysis of the story by the method by N. Burlakova (Burlakova, 2001). The study involved 34 persons: 17 children (aged 7–10) + 17 parents (15 mothers, 2 fathers). The dyads were studied when the children received treatment in the hospital (resided in the hospital together with the parent). **Results:** 1) Activity of the child together with the parent revealed several communicative patterns, which correlated differently to the estimation of communication by the parent. 2) The types of inner dialogues in children were discovered, which gave concrete expression to the inferiority feeling caused among others by the communication in the parent-child dyad. 3) The organization of the research enabled to follow the “production” of dialogues of self-awareness in children with chronic diseases.

**Conclusions:** The conducted research enables organization of individualized psychological and psychotherapeutical aid.

**Keywords:** parent-child communication; children with disabilities; self-awareness; inner dialogues

## EPP1139

### Psychiatric stigma in patients with comorbid HIV infection

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**Introduction:** HIV-positive patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders experience burden of double stigma. Comorbid pathology may alter structure of stigma and shall be considered in development of individual destigmatization programs.

**Objectives:** Study of psychiatric stigma features in HIV-positive and HIV-negative patients with schizophrenic disorders.

**Methods:** ISMI (Ritsher et al., 2003), PDD (Link et al., 1991) – to study stigma in 70 patients divided into three groups with respect to