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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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How is cognition relevant to relatives of people with schizophrenia?

Cognitive deficits have been reported in people with schizophrenia. Deficits in memory, attention and executive functioning are most commonly reported, with lesser degree of dysfunction in perceptual and language processes. Cognitive deficits are present early in the course of the disorder and are stable over time, and may be heritable. First-degree relatives of people with schizophrenia may show attenuated signs of cognitive deficits. If cognitive deficits found in people with schizophrenia are also found in their relatives, this may be suggestive of an underlying genetic basis. This is particularly informative in disorders that display complex inheritance patterns such as schizophrenia.

What is the evidence for cognition in relatives of people with schizophrenia?

High quality evidence shows small to medium-sized effects of poor executive functioning (including tasks of attention and language), poor visual memory, verbal memory, short-term and long-term episodic memory, and social cognition (Theory of Mind and negative facial expression recognition) in relatives of people with schizophrenia compared to people without schizophrenia. Moderate to high quality evidence also suggests small to medium-sized effects of lower IQ, poorer working and prospective memory and slower processing speed, and moderate quality evidence suggests poorer psychomotor and visuospatial ability in relatives.

Compared to relatives of people with bipolar disorder, moderate to high quality evidence suggests relatives of people with schizophrenia show small to medium-sized effects of poorer performance on IQ, verbal memory, working memory, processing speed, verbal fluency, and accuracy on executive functioning tasks.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.