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DIFFERENCES IN FACIAL EXPRESSION RECOGNITION BETWEEN PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND HEALTHY SUBJECTS

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Introduction: Patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) may show impairment in their ability to recognize facial expressions. It has been speculated that this deficit is linked to hypodopaminergic state which may be connected with an increase in amygdalic activity.

Objectives: The objective of the study was to assess ability in the perception and recognition of facial expressions among thirty-eight PD subjects and thirty-eight healthy control subjects matched by age, sex, and education level.

Aims: To investigate differences in perception of positive, negative and neutral facial expressions, such as sadness, happiness, anger, disgust, fear, astonishment, distrust, uncertainty, curiosity, satisfaction, tenderness, disbelief, embarrassment, disrespect.

Methods: The Polish Emotional Intelligence Scale - Faces (SIET) was used.

Results: The results obtained indicate more deficits in recognition of sadness, anger, distrust, embarrassment and tenderness in PD subjects, while happiness was better recognized by PD subjects than by healthy control subjects. Overall, negative expressions were more poorly recognized by PD patients while there were no differences in recognition of positive and neutral emotions in both groups. In addition, astonishment, embarrassment and distrust were more poorly recognized in females with PD when compared with female control subjects. Whereas in male PD subjects, the recognition of disbelief and negative expressions was more impaired when compared with male subjects from the control group.

Conclusions: The results suggest that a hypodopaminergic state affects ability to recognize facial expressions, particularly those expressing negative emotions.