

appeared to have an overall beneficial effect on alcohol consumption.

Conclusions: Further research is needed to evaluate the specific impacts on regular amphetamine use and to develop more efficacious interventions among regular cannabis users. A stepped-care approach to interventions for excessive alcohol consumption among people with a psychotic disorder is recommended.

01-07

Cannabis use as a complication in psychological treatments for people at ultrahigh risk of psychosis: early findings from the DEPTH trial

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The DEPTH project is a randomized controlled trial comparing the effectiveness of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and person-centered therapy for the prevention of psychosis among young people who are at ultrahigh risk. It is being conducted on two sites in New South Wales: the Hunter Valley and the Greater Western Area. The CBT is modeled on the manual developed by Paul French and Tony Morrison in the UK. This form of CBT has been shown in one trial to be effective in preventing transition to psychosis. However, it does not include any techniques that specifically focus on the reduction of substance abuse even though such abuse, especially of cannabis, is known to be very high among people who are at ultrahigh risk, and cannabis use has been found in prospective studies to be associated with the later onset of psychosis. Therefore, we have adapted French and Morrison's CBT by integrating it with a manual for motivational interviewing (MI) with young cannabis users. MI is directed toward the resolution of ambivalence and movement toward change, with the resources and motivation to change considered to reside within the client. The therapist's task is to create a set of conditions that will enhance the client's own motivation and commitment for change by drawing on their personal perceptions, goals and values. The ways in which CBT and MI are integrated in the DEPTH project will be illustrated with case material.

Personality Disorders (International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders Symposium)

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Overview

This symposium brings together researchers from Australia and New Zealand affiliated with the International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders. It canvasses current personality disorder research from neurobiology through to interpersonal processes and intervention across the life span from youth to old age.

02-01

Emotion processing and regulation in first-presentation borderline personality disorder

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Emotion dysregulation is widely believed to be one of the core features of borderline personality disorder (BPD). To date, there has been no study examining psychophysiological and self-report measures of deliberate regulation of emotions in BPD in those in the early phases of the disorder. The aims of the study were to measure the 1) psychophysiological and subjective emotional response and 2) psychophysiological and subjective ability to regulate one's emotional response to emotional images in 15- to 24-year-olds with first-presentation BPD compared with healthy controls. Twenty patients with full-syndrome BPD and 20 healthy comparison participants were examined. Test stimuli used were a set of standardized photographic images with pleasant, neutral or unpleasant valence. Participants were also instructed to either 'maintain' or 'suppress' the emotional response they were having to the stimuli. In addition to self-report ratings, emotional responses to the stimuli were measured by startle response and skin conductance. Contrary to the hypotheses, self-report and psychophysiological data did not provide evidence that the BPD participants reacted with more intense affective responses

to unpleasant stimuli than the control participants. In fact, the BPD participants had significantly lower skin conductance responses and showed an absence of the fear-potentiated startle response, suggesting a general state of underarousal. On the emotion regulation task, both groups showed similar startle responses when instructed to maintain or suppress their emotions. These results do not support current theories of emotion dysregulation in BPD, suggesting instead that those with BPD are hyporesponsive to affective stimuli.

02-02

Pituitary volume in adolescents with first-presentation borderline personality disorder

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Background: Borderline personality disorder (BPD) might be associated with hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis dysregulation. Previous studies in adult BPD samples have been equivocal possibly because of confounding factors, such as chronicity of BPD and associated comorbidity. Studying first-presentation adolescent BPD samples minimizes these confounds.

Methods: Twenty BPD (15 women, mean age 17.3 years) and 20 healthy control participants (15 women, mean age 19.0 years) underwent magnetic resonance imaging scanning. Pituitary gland volumes (PGVs) were estimated and compared between the groups and also within the BPD group, based upon exposure to childhood trauma.

Results: PGV did not differ between patients with BPD and controls ($P = 0.6$; effect size = 0.19). Patients with BPD exposed to childhood trauma ($n = 9$) had smaller (−18%) pituitaries compared with patients with BPD with no exposure to childhood trauma ($n = 10$; $P = 0.1$; Effect size = 0.74).

Conclusions: These findings suggest that exposure to trauma, rather than BPD *per se*, might be associated with altered PGV, possibly reflecting HPA dysfunction.

02-03

An MRI study of pituitary volume and suicidal behaviour in adolescents with first-presentation borderline personality disorder

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There has been a lack of research examining the association between hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis function and suicidal behaviour in patients diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD), despite the established relationship between BPD and suicide. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between pituitary gland volume (PGV) and number of suicidal behaviours in adolescent patients with first-presentation BPD. The main findings indicate that age, internalizing problems and number of suicidal behaviours are significant predictors of PGV in first-presentation BPD. The larger PGV in those with a higher number of suicidal behaviours might reflect greater activation of the HPA axis by the actual act of self-harm or increased activation of the stress response by factors that also lead to suicidal behaviour, such as life events. The study points to the need to explore other suicide parameters (eg intent, medical threat) together with direct neuroendocrine measures in larger samples of patients with BPD.

02-04

Interpersonal functioning in borderline personality disorder: the role of attachment, self-schema and social cognition

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Background: The study investigated the clinical picture of young people with borderline personality disorder (BPD) traits by comparing them with a group of young people with major depressive disorder (MDD) on a set of variables that target core features of BPD