triggering, and disorder-prolonging factors. Effective treatment strategies have to be based on an accurate differential diagnosis concerning the complex constellation of conditions underlying and establishing the dynamic process of a disorder and its meaning

S16.02

Pychopathology and classification - married or divorced

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Qualitative analyses is a phenomenological-oriented framework for psychopatological research useful in hypothesis formulation and exploratory studies, as well as in assessement of real world, first-personal experiences of laboratory findings or sub-personal impairments. Its aim is a wide range understanding of the patient's morbid subjectivity, not constrained in a priori fixed schemata.

We describe the basic principles of this method applied to psychopathological research. The qualitative approach to anomalous experience is concerned with bringing forth the typical feature(s) of actual personal experiences. A three-step procedure is described entailing assessement of subjective experiences, positing of subjective experiences within personal narratives and finally the construction of trans-personal prototypes. Qualitative research method is based on systematic but flexible interrogation of initially unstructured phenomena; it requires maximum elasticity in generating new categories from phenomena and enhances dense conceptual development and dialectical process between phenomena and the clinician's conceptualizations. It promotes also clinical setting as a source of relevant data of research; it also allows knowledge of single patients deeper than the experimental setting and may promote s a more circunstantiated comprehension of them.

Symposium: Current issues on genetics of suicidal behaviour

S30.01

Genetic findings in the HPA-axis in suicide attempters

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According to a stress-vulnerability model, genetic set-up, as well as environmental exposure to psychological stress, contributes to a person's predisposition for suicidality, as well as to Major Depression (MD). The main neurochemical findings on suicidality have suggested alterations in neurosytems which are usually implicated in MD; a lowered serotonergic (5HT) activity, depletion of the noradrenergic (NA) system and dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. Whereas the genes of e.g. the 5HT system and of the key NA-biosynthesis enzyme, tyrosine hydroxylase, have been studied extensively in this context the genes in the HPA axis have only begun to be investigated recently.

Our group was the first to study the genetic variation in the CRHR1 gene in connection to depression and stress among suicidal individuals. We reported also findings that genetic variation in a transcription factor of the POMC gene, TBX 19, which is regulated by CRH, showed association and linkage to the anger/hostility personality trait and suicidality. Those results suggest that genetic variation in the CRH-mediated regulation of the HPA axis is a factor of importance in suicidality and, as other have shown as well, for major depression.

During symposiums the results obtained from the replication analyses of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in candidate genes, in 1000 family trios with suicide attempter offspring, by using the transmission disequilibrium test both in a two-stages screening/replication sample design and in detailed reanalysis in the entire sample, will be discussed.

S30.02

Role of BDNF gene in suicidal behaviours

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Background and Aims: Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) has been implicated in neuronal survival and plasticity and reported as being involved in various mental illnesses, including attempted and completed suicide. Evidence from postmortem studies has also shown an altered expression of BDNF in suicide victims brains. We previously investigated the impact of the Val66Met polymorphism of the BDNF gene in determining a suicide attempt in depressed patient and found an association between the BDNF variant and history of early maltreatment in depressed patients with suicide attempts. We then conducted a study on post-mortem brains of suicide completers and their controls to further test the hypothesis of an involvement of BDNF in suicide-related neurobiological processes.

Methods: 535 specimens of brain from subjects dead either by suicide (N=271) and by other cause (N= 261) were genotyped for the Val66Met and Prom 281 CA polymorphisms of the BDNF gene.

Results:. No associations were found between either the first or the second variant of the BDNF gene and the suicidal behaviour.

Conclusions: as the case for other candidate genes, results from genetic studies of the BDNF gene are conflicting and arduous to replicate. Based on the analysis of bias in the study design and procedures, assimilation of methodology and increase in sample size could be helpful in addressing the result variability in such studies.

S30.03

Role of serotonergic pathways on suicidal behaviour: Relationship with the impulsivity of the suicide attempt

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Suicidal behaviour is a serious problem world-wide. However, the number of risk factors and the complex nature of their interactions do not allow sufficiently accurate prediction of whether a given individual is likely to try to commit suicide. Several lines of evidence suggest that suicidal behaviour has a genetic component.

In recent years, a growing number of molecular genetic studies have focused on the serotonin system, suggesting that this system may be involved in the pathogenesis of suicidal behaviour, aggression, and impulsivity. Post-mortem studies have reported fewer serotonin transporter (5-HTT) binding sites and greater expression of serotonin 2A (5-HT2A) receptors in the brains of suicide victims compared to control subjects, partly due to functional polymorphisms that affect the expression of these genes.

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