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Cognitive Remediation in Early Psychosis and in At-risk Mental States - Approaches and Efficacy

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Cognitive impairments have a high prevalence in schizophrenia, and are important determinants of functional outcome and treatment responsiveness. They are well-documented in chronic schizophrenia patients but are already apparent before the onset of the disorder and are predictive of transition to psychosis. Cognitive Remediation approaches have proved to be effective in enhancing cognitive functions and functional outcome in multi-episode schizophrenia patients. Recent studies suggest that younger people with an early course of illness are even more likely to benefit from these interventions. Therefore, Cognitive Remediation approaches may be especially appropriate for early intervention in psychosis. However, there is still a paucity of studies that evaluated Cognitive Remediation in early psychosis patients and in those symptomatically at-risk for psychosis. Moreover, several approaches are summarized under the umbrella term Cognitive Remediation. Consequently, they differ in content, setting, and practical application. Therefore, it remains rather unclear which type of therapy works best for the specific treatment needs of these patients. Against this background, this presentation will summarize and critically discuss current CRT approaches and their efficacy in early psychosis and in at-risk mental states with regard to cognitions, symptom levels, and functional outcome. Furthermore, we will present novel treatments and study designs specifically developed for early intervention in psychosis.