

T. White¹

¹Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Erasmus University Medical Centre, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Brain imaging studies of children at risk for severe psychopathology have often focused on either children at high genetic risk, or those already showing severe behavioral problems, and thus at a high behavioral risk for severe psychopathology. Research into schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorder have termed this latter group as an ultra-high risk group, or those close to crossing the threshold into illness ('one foot in the door and other other foot on a banana peel!') Few studies have attempted to extract high-risk children from the general population. In fact, it has been very difficult to predict which children from the general population will go on to develop severe illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder, or other severe illnesses. However, it is likely easier to identify those children who are at a high-risk of developing psychopathology as adults, irrespective of their eventual 'categorical' diagnosis. The Generation R Study in Rotterdam, the Netherlands is a longitudinal, prenatal cohort study of nearly 7,000 children who have been followed from prenatal life forward. This talk will present neurobiological findings in a large group of six to eight year old children who are at increased risk for developing a severe psychiatric disorder. A discussion of the selection of these children and the results from structural and functional neuroimaging studies provide a glimpse into the early neurobiology of children at risk for severe psychopathology.