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## COPING WITH DELUSION IN SCHIZOPHRENIA AND PSYCHOTIC DEPRESSION

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**Introduction:** Coping plays an important role in processes involved in the development of mental disorders, influencing decompensation and recovery from patients. Coping is defined as an active self-generation of cognitive and behavioural procedures, which impact directly on the symptom or reduce distress caused by it. How patients cope with delusions lack empirical evidence. Although, in the last years, delusion has been considered a multidimensional phenomenon where emotional, cognitive and action-oriented aspects were recognized, the impact of delusional dimensions on coping is still unknown.

**Objectives:** To assess coping strategies used by patients with schizophrenia and psychotic depression to deal with delusion. The relationships between coping, psychopathology and the dimensions of delusional experience will be examined.

**Methods:** Thirty deluded schizophrenics and 30 psychotic depressed patients were investigated. Instruments to the assessment of delusion were used, as the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) and the Heidelberger Delusion Profile (HDP).

Correlations between psychopathology, coping and delusion dimensions were calculated.

**Results:** Coping strategies used to deal with delusion were different in the 2 groups of patients. Schizophrenic patients use more medical care, while psychotic depressed patients use more depressive coping. Significant correlations between psychopathology, coping and delusion dimensions could be shown. In contrast to depressive patients, the emotional and cognitive dimensions of delusion seem to influence coping in patients with schizophrenia.

**Conclusions:** Coping strategies are different depending on the diagnosis. In schizophrenia, the emotional and the cognitive dimensions seem to influence how patients cope with delusional experience.