

Poster presentation

Place of residence-lexical ambiguity: is there any relation between them in schizophrenia?

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Background

The purpose of this study was the investigation of the influence of the residential place in the chronic schizophrenics' perception of ambiguous words. Subjects: Thirty-nine chronic schizophrenics participated in the study (20 male, 19 female). The first group, consisting of 21 participants, was living in alternative residences (first group). The other 18 were living in a traditional psychiatric hospital (second group). The two groups did not differ in the years of schooling and the years of their commitment to institution. All the patients fulfilled the criteria of a) schizophrenia, according to ICD-10 and b) those of chronicity. Patients with neurodegenerative diseases and severe cognitive dysfunction were excluded from the study.

Material and Methods

The Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) and an ambiguous-words-test were administered. The ambiguous-words-test consisted of a set of incomplete sentences. The subjects were asked to select the meaning of a target word, among three options, in order to form a meaningful sentence. One of the words had the correct meaning according to the contextual information, the second was semantically irrelevant (semantic error), and the third was phonologically similar to the target word (phonological error).

Results

According to the analysis it was found that a) the two groups differed in the total correct answers they produced for ambiguous nouns [(F = 1.36) = 0.022, p < 0.05], for ambiguous verbs [(F = 1.36) = 0.021, p < 0.05] and for ambiguous adjectives [(F = 1.35) = 0.016, p < 0.05]. The

first group performed better in all the above tasks; there was also statistical significance in the quality of wrong answers. The first group scored fewer semantic [(F = 1.36) = 0.023, p < 0.05] and phonological total wrong answers [(F = 0.040), p < 0.05]. The two groups showed statistical difference in the total semantic wrong answers for adjectives [(F = 1.36) = 0.023, p < 0.05] b) The scale of positive syndrome correlated in a positive way with the total score of semantically wrong answers in adjectives (r = 0.334, p < 0.05). The negative scale correlated in a negative way with the total correct answers for nouns (r = -0.362, p < 0.05), total correct answers for verbs (r = -0.407, p < 0.05) and total correct answers for words (r = -0.441, p < 0.001). The general psychopathology correlated in a negative way with the total correct answers for verbs, (r = -0.327, p < 0.05) and the total correct answers for words (r = -0.400, p < 0.05), while it correlated positively with the total score of phonologically wrong answers in nouns (r = 0.441, p < 0.001).

Discussion

The chronic schizophrenics, who reside in alternative residences or in a traditional psychiatric hospital, differ in the way they perceive and elaborate ambiguous words. The place of residence possibly influences the way schizophrenics perform specific verbal tasks. Furthermore, performance in particular tasks, both in the quality and quantity of answers, is correlated with the positive/negative symptoms of schizophrenia.