

P-1222 - DECISION MAKING IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: A NEUROECONOMIC TRIAL ON SOCIAL COGNITION

A.Castelnovo, R.Ranieri, M.Marcatili, S.Scarone

Psychiatry Department, University of Milan, Medical School, San Paolo Hospital, Milan, Italy

Introduction: We have studied the strategic behaviour of schizophrenic patients playing the Dictator Game (DG) and the Ultimatum Game (UG). The model of Homo economicus predicted by traditional economical theories describes the individual involved in economical negotiations as a selfish, rational trader, whose leading purpose is to maximize his utility function. Neuroeconomy contradicts this model supplying data that show a more emotive, irrational behaviour in normal people involved in bargaining tasks.

Objective: To study how people affected by schizophrenia allocate a resource when asked if sharing it or not, and how their behaviour change during a negotiation, in which strategic mentalizing can help to gain some good.

Aim: To demonstrate that schizophrenic patients would not show an increment in their offers as Proposers in UG compared to DG and would not refuse unfair offers as Responders.

Methods: 19 schizophrenic patients and 10 controls were tested with DG and UG. Participants underwent 24 trials of DG as Dictators, 24 trials of UG as Offerers and 24 trials of UG as Responders.

Results: In the schizophrenic group UG mean offers were not significantly higher than DG offers, while controls showed the opposite. Compared to controls, schizophrenic patients showed a higher propensity to accept unfair offers. Moreover schizophrenic patients' behaviour was not influenced by the type of player (avatar vs human being).

Conclusions: Our study presents data that assimilate schizophrenic subjects to homo economicus: in fact, compared to normal people, schizophrenic patients show “more rational” bargaining behaviour, due to ToM deficit.