Social Cognition is Associated with General Cognitive Function Post-Stroke

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Objective

Social cognition encompasses the processing of information about other peoples’ thoughts and emotions. The DSM-5 considers social cognition one of six domains where impairment may lead to the diagnosis of post-stroke neurocognitive disorder.

How potential impairments in social cognition presents in the stroke population has not yet been sufficiently described. The aim of this study was to examine the association between social cognition and general cognitive function post-stroke.

Methods

A subset of the patients participating in the longitudinal multicentre Norwegian Cognitive Impairment After Stroke Study (Nor-COAST) was approached to participate in an additional follow-up with social cognition tests three years post-stroke.

The study used the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) as a measure of general cognitive function. Two tests were used to measure different aspects of social cognition: the Hinting Task and the Pictures of Facial Affect.

Results

29 patients (76% male, age=67.8, SD=10.5, education=13.8, SD=3.5, Modified Rankin Scale= 1.03, SD=1.0, MMSE=28.8, SD=1.2) were included. On average, patients correctly identified 74.9% (SD=12.2) of the facial expressions. For the Hinting Task, the mean score was 18.9/20 (SD=0.9).

A better performance on MMSE was significantly associated with better performance in emotion recognition. No significant association was found between MMSE and the theory of mind task (p>.05).

Table 1. Association between general cognitive function and emotion recognition.

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