

Deictic relational responding in schizophrenia.

Impairment in the ability to attribute mental states is a characteristic feature of schizophrenia demonstrated in the field of cognitive psychology for more than a decade. Relational Frame Theory (RFT) has recently proposed a behavioural approach to this skill in terms of deictic relational responding and has proved efficiency in the assessment as well as in the training of these repertoires. The current research aims to examine RFT predictions in psychosis by assessing deictic framing with perspective-taking and belief-attribution tasks in a group of 15 patients diagnosed with schizophrenia and in a group of aged matched controls. Results revealed poorer performance of the patients in responding in accordance with deictic frames. In the perspective-taking protocol, reversing and double reversing relations produced the most important number of errors. No difference appeared between the two groups on simple perspective-taking. In the belief-attribution protocol, patients were as accurate as controls only on self-attribution of true belief, which indicates difficulties in relation to the interpersonal deictic frame and to the logical not. Group effects remained significant even after controlling for IQ. Implications for the remediation of deficits in mental states attribution linked to psychosis are discussed.

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