Social defeat & Psychosis: 
AN EXPERIENCE SAMPLING STUDY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESS

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RESEARCH QUESTION

→ Will an increased number/intensity of social defeat experiences lead to an increased risk of psychotic experiences?

→ How, where, and when do individuals experience social defeat in daily life?
  • Context and content of experience

Definition of social defeat:
The experience of feeling subordinated, inferior, humiliated, or ‘othered’

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

N = 24 (62.5% females, Mean age = 23.4)
Inclusion criteria:
• Aged 18-30
• No diagnosis of severe mental illness
• Must own an iPhone or Android smartphone

MEASURES

Baseline questionnaires:
• CAPE-42: Self-report questionnaire for psychosis-proneness
• Perceived Stress Scale
• Social Anxiety Questionnaire for Adults
• Scale of Subjective Social Status

ESM questionnaire:
• Social Defeat Questionnaire, completed on the PIEL Survey app.
  Participants are asked to report the following information about their last social interaction:
  • Contextual information (environment, who they interacted with)
  • Self-report questions regarding how they felt during the interaction

PROCEDURE

Experience Sampling Method (ESM):
• Participants are asked to go about their regular daily lives:
  • Random notifications 5 times/day for 14 days
  • Prompted to complete the ESM questionnaire regarding their last social interaction

ADVANTAGES OF ESM

• Naturalistic and representative of daily life
• Captures environmental & social context
• In-the-moment assessment
  • Avoids recall bias
• Longitudinal data collection
  • When do people experience social defeat? Does it fluctuate over timecontexts/people?
• Captures variability of behaviour & experiences

SOCIAL DEFEAT PARADIGM

Resident-intruder test:
Resident attacks Intruder displays submissive behavior Mesocorticolimbic DA hyperactivity

Social interactions:
Chronic social defeat experiences Mesocorticolimbic DA sensitization/increased baseline activity Increased risk of schizophrenia

Social defeat as a unifying mechanism:

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SO WHAT?

Studying the social determinants of psychosis within a real-world context may contribute to a deeper understanding of psychopathological phenomena.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS