

Context processing in schizotypal personality disorder: Evidence of specificity of impairment to the schizophrenia spectrum.

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Working memory abnormalities, which are particularly pronounced on context processing tasks, appear relatively specific to schizophrenia spectrum illnesses compared with other psychotic disorders. However, the specificity of context processing deficits to schizotypal personality disorder (SPD), a prototype of schizophrenia, has not been studied. The authors administered 3 versions of the modified AX Continuous Performance Test and an N-back working memory test to 63 individuals with SPD and 25 with other personality disorders, as well as 42 healthy controls. For the AX Continuous Performance Test standard and degraded versions, there was a significant Trial Type \times Delay \times Group interaction, as SPDs made significantly more errors reflecting poor maintenance of context and fewer errors reflecting good maintenance of context. SPDs also demonstrated poor performance on the N-back, especially at the 2-back condition. Context processing errors and N-back accuracy scores were related to disorganization symptoms. These findings, which are quite similar to those previously reported in patients with schizophrenia, suggest that context processing deficits are specific to the schizophrenia spectrum and are not a reflection of overall psychopathology. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)