BACKGROUND

- The obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) occurs with an unexpectedly high frequency associated to schizophrenia (12%) [1], compared to the general population (1-2%).
- Most studies focused on the chronic stage of the psychosis, but were studies aiming also at the early stages of schizophrenia and which suggested that the effect of obsessive-compulsive symptoms (OCS) in schizophrenia depends on the stage of the disease, the OCS causing more severe cognitive alterations in chronic schizophrenia and exercising protective effects in the early stages of schizophrenia [2,3].

AIM

- To verify the hypothesis of the protective effect on the cognition exercised by the OCS, in the early stage of schizophrenia
- To test the hypothesis that the cognitive functioning of patients with schizo-OCD is independent from the severity of the OCD

METHOD

- 64 patients selected into three lots of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia and/or OCD
- aged ≤ 26 years old, acute episode ≤ 3 weeks of antipsychotic treatment
- psychometric scales and selected neurocognitive tests

RESULTS

- The onset of OCD is significantly earlier than the psychotic one in schizo-OCD lot (p=0.0001, at the Matched-Paired t test two-sided)
- The evolution of the disease in the early stage of schizophrenia seems to be relatively similar in the 2 lots, independently from the presence of the OCD

EVOLUTIONAL AND CLINICAL VARIABLES

- Schizo-OCD are much better educated than schizo (r²=12.46, d.f. 2, p Bonferroni=0.003, 0.014)
- The amplitude of the total/positive and general psychotic symptoms is significantly lower in schizo-OCD vs pure Schizo
- OCS is clinically expressed similarly in both groups (p>0.05)

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES

- Schizo-OCD - intermediate scores, better than Schizo patients, nearly statistically significance (P=0.0622)
- Schizo-OCD much better than schizo (p<0.01)

CONCLUSIONS

- Schizo-OCD patients had significantly better performances related to the visual and motor processing, work memory, as well as the cognitive flexibility, than their opponents without OCD
- For schizo-OCD group, the obsessive effort to memorize may be associated with better scores regarding the learning capacity at least in the early stage of schizophrenia
- The presence of OCS in the early stages of schizophrenia provides a protection level against the priming of cognitive deficits specific schizophrenia
- The neurocognitive results seems to be independent from the severity of OCS (p<0.05)
- visual and motor processing, work memory and learning abilities make more likely a specific cluster of symptoms in specific disorders which may imprint on it a special evolution.

REFERENCES