COULD CANNABIS USE MODERATE THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INSIGHT AND DEPRESSION IN PSYCHOSIS: A PROSPECTIVE STUDY

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Introduction
Insight is recognized as a key element in the evaluation process of first episode psychosis (FEP). While insight can have a positive impact on FEP in terms of medication adherence [1] and functional outcome [2], it seems to be associated with increased depression level and suicidal behavior [3]. This has been termed the “insight paradox” and has been confirmed by a recent meta-analysis [4]. Several studies have tried to identify factors that could moderate this association but surprisingly, no study has questioned the role of cannabis use as a potential mediator in this relationship. In a cohort of FEP patients followed over a period of three years in a specialized early psychosis program, we hypothesized that continued cannabis use among patients with high insight would yield more depressive symptoms during the first year after entry into the program than non-users.

Aims
- To examine to what extent cannabis use moderates the alleged association between insight and depression during the first 12 months.
- To explore the evolution of that association between 12 and 36 months after entry into the program, and the potential relationship between baseline predictors such as insight, cannabis use and medication adherence, on positive and negative symptomatology, and on functional outcome.

Methods
- 214 FEP patients
- Multivariate regression models with insight, medication adherence and cannabis use and their respective two-way and three-way interactions as independent variables and PANSS +, PANSS -, MADRS and GAF scores as dependent variables.

Results
- When compared with patients with high cannabis use, depression decreases significantly in patients with high treatment adherence and low cannabis use when insight is present (Fig. 1).
- We found no association between any of the independent variables measured at the beginning of the program and depression after 24 and 36 months respectively.
- We found that the level of insight always predicted global functioning throughout the program.

Conclusion
Interestingly, our study supports the general idea that cannabis use enhances the likelihood of depression in FEP patients presenting with high insight. It also confirms the strong predictive value of insight on global functioning. Interventions in reducing cannabis use in FEP patients are therefore critical during the first year following the onset of psychosis.

We declare no conflict of interest related to the present work.