Age at the time of exposure to trauma modulates the psychopathological profile in early psychosis patients.

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**Introduction**

Evidence suggests a relationship between exposure to trauma and clinical presentation in psychotic patients. However, the potential impact of age at the time of exposure on symptoms profile has been understudied in early psychosis (EP) patients. We planned the current study in order to examine, in a sample of 196 EP patients treated at a specialized program, the potential differential impact of childhood trauma (CT), according to age at the time of exposure, on the psychopathological profile of patients during the early phase of the disease.

**Methods**

**Procedure:**
Follow-up assessments, exploring the evolution of psychopathology are conducted by a research psychologist and after 2, 6, 12, 18, 24, 30 and 36 months of treatment. Patients were recruited from a specialized program for early intervention in psychotic disorders in Lausanne, the Treatment and Early Intervention in Psychosis Program (TIPP) which has been implementing since 2004.

**Inclusion criteria:**
- 18 to 35 years old, catchment area of Lausanne
- Threshold of psychosis (as per the CAARMS criteria)

**Exclusion criteria:**
- Psychosis related to intoxication or organic brain disease
- Intelligence quotient below 70
- More than a total of 6 months of antipsychotic medication

**Subjects:** Within a sample of 240 enrolled in TIPP program, 196 patients were assessed for psychopathology.

**Design:**
- Early Trauma
- Late Trauma
- Baseline
- Childhood (birth-11)
- Early adolescence (12-16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Domain</th>
<th>Early Trauma (N=91)</th>
<th>Late Trauma (N=77)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PANSS</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.028</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMRS</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**

**Figures 1 (a, b, c, d). Psychopathy scores over 36 months: Comparisons between Early or Late Trauma patients and Non-Trauma patients.**

**Conclusions**

- These results suggest that the age at the time of occurrence of trauma modulates its impact on positive, depressive, manic but not in negative symptoms in EP patients.
- Patients exposed to CT have more negative symptoms than non-exposed patients, independently of the age at the time of exposure.
- These different impacts on symptom dimensions may have a neurobiological substrate and further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms and ultimately develop new treatments.
- More studies are needed to validate empirically the new psychological treatments that have recently been developed for severely traumatized patients suffering from psychosis, considering this subgroup of EP patients certainly deserves specific attention.

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