Abstract

There is a need for in-depth research into the individual symptoms of schizotypy to not only further understanding of how these symptoms interact in the condition itself, but also in the larger schizophrenia spectrum. Because many symptoms, such as paranoia and constricted affect, are commonly present in a wide variety of disorders, research into their psychological and neurological origins will contribute to research in multiple disorders, not just schizotypy and schizophrenia. There are many biological and environmental factors that influence the intensity of symptoms in disorders. In schizotypy, stress is a measurable factor that influences and is influenced by paranoia. This study aimed to assess the relationships between paranoia, constricted affect and stress responses to threat. Constricted Affect was used as a measure of one negative schizotypal symptom. In this study, participants were presented threatening images while heart rate and skin conductance levels were recorded to investigate differences in physiological responses among the range of schizotypy scores on the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire (SPQ). Results show that participants did rate threatening images as more threatening than neutral images, but that the physiological responses were not significantly different between the two image types. While none of the hypotheses were supported by the data, exploratory analyses show that baseline heart rate and heart rate responses to neutral images can significantly predict paranoia scores.

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