

S41-01

## SOCIAL COGNITION IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: IMPAIRMENTS AND TREATMENT APPROACHES

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Impairments in cognitive processes underlying social interaction (i.e. "social cognition") have increasingly attracted interest in schizophrenia research during the last years. These impairments concern various components of social cognition, exist relatively independent from impairments in basic cognition and from clinical psychopathology, are already present at the onset of the disorder, and can even be detected in persons at high risk of developing schizophrenia. As social cognitive impairments are closely related to poor functional outcome, and because longitudinal studies have proven the stability of social cognitive impairments across the course of the disorder despite clinically efficacious traditional treatment, various specialized treatment and rehabilitation programs targeting social cognitive impairments have been developed during the last years. These programs differ significantly with regard to the conceptualization of the impairments and the required treatment strategies, i.e. whether the impairments are suggested to be represent cognitive "deficits" or cognitive "biases" requiring remediation vs. debiasing approaches. Moreover the programs differ with regard to the scope of cognitive subcomponents addressed, i.e. whether the program focuses on only one social cognitive subcomponent like affect recognition or whether several subcomponents are addressed in parallel. As the evaluation of such programs is still in an infant stage there is still debate about the most efficacious approach.

This presentation will give an overview on social cognitive impairments and on respective treatment strategies, before the subsequent presentations will exemplify three treatment programs, which may help schizophrenia patients to overcome their impairments in social cognition and social functioning.