Coping, treatment motivation and psychosocial functioning in schizophrenia: Testing mediator and moderator effects

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Introduction: Schizophrenia is characterized by impairments in motivation and coping as well as decrements in psychosocial functioning in major life areas. One important factor that has received increasing attention in schizophrenia is treatment motivation.

Objectives: This study examined the nature of the relationships among treatment motivation, coping, and psychosocial functioning for persons with schizophrenia. Hypotheses concerning both mediator and moderator mechanisms were tested. This study examined the nature of the relationships among treatment motivation, coping, and psychosocial functioning for persons with schizophrenia. Hypotheses concerning both mediator and moderator mechanisms were tested.

Methods: 138 individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia were recruited as they were admitted to outpatient and inpatient psychosocial rehabilitation programs in Moscow-based psychiatric hospital. The following measures were used: measures of motivation were administered at baseline by testers blind to scores on other study variables; measures of coping (COPE, CEROQ) and psychosocial functioning (PSP, EQ5D5L, SF36, Q-Les-Q-18) were administered at baseline. Data were analyzed using latent construct modeling to test for mediator and moderator effects.

Results: There were strong bivariate relationships between coping (C), motivation (M), and psychosocial functioning (SF). The results demonstrated that coping strongly mediated the relationship between motivation and psychosocial functioning. This mediation was evidenced by: (a) the direct path from motivation to functional outcome no longer being statistically significant after the introduction of coping into the model; (b) the statistical significance of the indirect path from motivation through coping to functional outcome. There was no support for the moderation hypotheses.

Conclusions: Motivation influences psychosocial functioning through its relationship with coping. Coping is a critical mechanism for explaining the relationship between motivation and psychosocial functioning. Implications for the theoretical understanding and psychosocial treatments in schizophrenia are discussed.