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Goal-directed actions and their impairments in schizophrenia

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Goal-directed actions refer to behaviours that are formulated following a given objective by building a plan and selecting actions. These actions should lead to the attended issue (goal) either immediately or within a longer period. This type of actions is an important unit of analysis in the study of human behaviour because its involvement in most of the complex or novel situations a subject may encounter regardless of the cognitive, affective or social abilities this situation implies. If this field of study is largely investigated in healthy subjects, it is still not well documented for schizophrenia. However, we will demonstrate that this point of view enables to have a more global perspective on schizophrenic's deficits in terms of symptoms and (cognitive) abilities. A more systematic analysis can lead to the development of integrative hypotheses of these deficits, instead of considering that they are distinct troubles. Our presentation will aim to review the field of goal-directed actions' study in schizophrenia by clarifying the concepts and giving theoretical landmarks for the comprehension of existing results.