Exploring the relationship between source monitoring and cognitive theory of mind in schizophrenic patients with and without auditory hallucinations

Coralie Rouge (1), Alice Bodart (1) and Mandy Rossignol (1).

(1) UMons

Schizophrenia has been associated with cognitive deficits that affect cognitive Theory of Mind (ToM) or source monitoring. In particular, schizophrenic patients (SP) may misattribute their self-generated thoughts to external sources, and this external attribution bias (EAB) would be responsible for auditory hallucinations (AH). In these patients, an altered inference of one’s own and other’s mental states (cognitive ToM deficit) could contribute to the EAB and lead to AH. Yet, while an association between these cognitive functions has been shown in children’s populations, no study so far has investigated this question in schizophrenia. Thereby, this study aims to investigate the relationship between AH, source monitoring and cognitive ToM. To do so, 17 male schizophrenic inpatients with (9) and without (8) AH and 17 controls paired in age and gender undertook a source monitoring task with three conditions distinguishing two internal sources (words read aloud VS. imagined), two external sources (words read by female VS. male voices) and internal with external sources (words imagined VS. heard). Cognitive ToM was assessed by a referential communication task (Champagne-Lavaux et al., 2009) which consists of an interaction between interlocutors about tangrams. We hypothesize that SP will show (i) less efficient source monitoring and cognitive ToM, (ii) a correlation between cognitive ToM deficit and EAB and (iii) these deficits will be majorated in patients with higher levels of AH. Results, which would allow us to better understand the mechanisms related to AH in schizophrenia, are being analyzed and will be presented at the conference.