Cognitive Impairment ad Duration of Untreated First Episode Psychoses in Pakistan

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This study investigated the impact of the duration of untreated psychoses (DUP) on cognition in patients with first episode psychoses (FEP). It was assumed that the length of DUP will affect their performance on mini mental status examination and spatial span subscale of Wechsler Memory Scale–III. Some 60 patients—41 men and 19 women, falling in three diagnostic categories according to DSM-IV-TR i.e. schizophrenia, schizoaffective and substance-induced psychoses were drawn from different hospitals of Lahore and Faisalabad. Twenty eight patients experienced shorter DUP (less than 80 weeks) and 32 patients had longer DUP (more than 80 weeks). Results suggested that patients of FEP did not significantly differ on cognitive functioning indices across groups by length of DUP, except for recall and orientation. The severity of the illness proved to be an important factor affecting cognitive functioning. Length of DUP was positively associated with positive symptoms of psychosis. Negative symptoms significantly predicted performance on Spatial Working Memory Scale. Longer DUP does not appear to contribute enough to greater cognitive deterioration following onset of psychoses, as severity of illness may be a more important aspect.