

ANHEDONIA AND THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF EMOTION IN SCHIZOPHRENIA

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This study was conducted to examine the subjective experience of emotion and anhedonia in patients with schizophrenia. Evidence from previous research has shown that patients with schizophrenia report a greater degree of anhedonia in their daily lives than non-psychiatric controls (for a review, see Ettenberg, 1993). However, recent studies have shown that although patients with schizophrenia demonstrate deficits in affective expression, they show normal subjective report of affective experience when presented with explicit emotional stimuli (e.g. Berenbaum and Oltmanns, 1992; Kring and Neale, 1996). Forty-eight patients with schizophrenia and forty-eight non-psychiatric controls were presented with a range of emotionally evocative stimuli and asked to rate their emotional experience to each stimulus on dimensions of both arousal and valence. The task stimuli varied with respect to modality of presentation (visual, auditory) and content of the stimuli (positive, negative, neutral). Anhedonia was assessed by a standard self-report measure, as well as by ratings from a clinical interview. Furthermore, in order to assess participants self-report of unpleasant feelings in response to negative situations, a questionnaire was administered on which participants rated how they might feel in a variety of both pleasant and unpleasant situations. Finally, participants completed several standard cognitive tasks without explicit emotional content designed to assess memory, attention and abstract reasoning. Results will be discussed in terms of group differences between patients and controls with respect to self-reported anhedonia and subjective ratings to emotional stimuli. Results will also address whether cognitive deficits predict lower levels of subjective emotion on anhedonia questionnaires, as compared to subjective ratings of emotional stimuli. References Berenbaum, H., Oltmanns, T.F. (1992). Emotional experience and expression in schizophrenia and depression. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 101(1): 37-44. Ettenberg, A. (1993). Anhedonia. *Symptoms of Schizophrenia*. C. G. Costello (Ed.) New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc: 121-144. Kring, A. M., Neale, J.M. (1996). Do schizophrenic patients show a disjunctive relationship among expressive, experiential, and psychophysiological components of emotion? *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 105(2): 249-257.