In 2002, we began to investigate overconfidence errors in psychosis. In two pilot studies conducted in Germany (Moritz et al., 2003) and Canada (Moritz & Woodward, 2002), we asked participants to generate words in response to stimuli presented by the experimenter. Previously presented and self-generated words were then read to the participants along with distractor stimuli. Apart from simple recognition (old/new), participants were asked to indicate who they thought had produced the word (source attribution: experimenter or participant) and to estimate their response confidence. In both studies, patients with schizophrenia displayed overconfidence regarding false responses (feedback regarding the correctness of the decision was given later). As expected, healthy controls made fewer errors and were less confident regarding false responses than patients.

We assume that healthy participants tag mental events that are not supported by sufficient evidence as “not trustworthy”. Patients with schizophrenia, on the other hand, may have a deficit adjusting their level of confidence for memories that are correct or incorrect (replications by Moritz et al., 2006a; Moritz et al., 2004; Moritz et al., 2005; Moritz et al., 2006b; Moritz et al., 2008; Moritz & Woodward, 2006a, 2006b)

Importantly, the word source attribution paradigm discussed above did not employ any material relevant to delusions; all words produced by the experimenter were neutral, precluding tautological inferences (for a review, see Moritz & Woodward, 2006a). Overconfidence appears not to be memory-specific and has also been demonstrated for other cognitive domains, such as social cognition and emotion recognition (Köther et al., 2012, Moritz et al., 2014; Moritz et al., 2012).

Research Team

- PD Dr. Christina Andreou
- Dipl.-Psych. Birgit Hottenrott
- Prof. Dr. Steffen Moritz

Cooperating Partners

- Dr. Lukasz Gaweda (Medical University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland)
- Dr. Maarten Peters (University of Maastricht, Maastricht, Netherlands)
- Prof. Dr. Todd S. Woodward (University of British Columbia and Riverview Hospital, Vancouver, Canada)

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