

English summary

Beyond what is being said Emotional prosody: its neural basis and its relevance for schizophrenia

Layman's summary

Emotional prosody is a paralinguistic aspect of language, consisting of features including intonation, stress, pitch, and volume. It is also known as the emotional melody of speech. These cues are crucial for the understanding the intentions and emotional state of the other. The neural basis of emotional prosody has not been elucidated completely. Studies in this thesis have shown that different areas in the right hemisphere but also some areas in the left hemisphere are involved in emotional prosody perception. Many patients with schizophrenia show impairments in the perception and expression of emotional prosody. Two studies were done to examine how these impairments with schizophrenia relate to symptom clusters. Results showed that patients with more severe hallucinations and delusions made more errors emotional prosody perception. Severity of disorganisation symptoms such as problems with concentration and abstract thinking was also related to problems in the detection of emotional prosody. Furthermore, patients misinterpreting neutral faces and neutral prosody as fearful or angry, had more disorganisation problems, more hostility and depression and fear. These results lead to the conclusion that problems in the the recognition of emotions in others, can be related to different symptoms instead of solely with emotion disorders. Treatment of these symptoms may indirectly improve emotion perception. Emotion perception should however also be a target itself in psychosocial interventions. Improving emotion perception may break the vicious circle in which schizophrenia symptoms and problems in emotion perception are related and may reinforce each other, eventually leading to a better participation of social interactions.

