Synopsis no.: *S2.36*
Preliminary title: AGE OF ONSET OF PSYCHOSIS: ROLE OF CANNABIS USE IN FIRST EPISODE PSYCHOSIS PATIENTS (FEP)
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Background

Many studies show association between cannabis use and early age of onset of psychotic disorders, particularly schizophrenia (Donoghuea et al. 2013; Compton et al. 2009; González-Pinto et al., 2008). Even if most of the studies find difficulties at the time to isolate cannabis use due to the gateway effect to use other comorbid substances (Degenhardt et al. 2010, Mayet et al. 2012).

A systematic meta-analysis revealed that the age of onset was 2.70 years earlier among FEP with history of cannabis use (z = −7.18; P < .001) and was 2.00 years earlier in FEP with history of unspecified substance use compared with non–substance-using FEP (z = −6.87; P < .001) (Large et al., 2011).

In further support of this relationship, an association has also been found between the earlier age of first cannabis use and the age of onset of schizophrenia, in patients who used cannabis daily, and especially high-potency cannabis (Di Forti et al. 2013).

Hypothesis

We will analyze data among FEP with cannabis use, not including FEP with history of use of others drugs.

The FEP who have used cannabis early (before 16 years old) have an earlier age of

psychosis onset than FEP who have used cannabis later.

Furthermore, age of FEP seems to be related with specific patterns of cannabis use. So that heavy use (more than 5 times a week), high potency (types of cannabis) and duration of more than 2 years could reduce the age of onset of psychosis.

Objectives

To test this hypothesis on a sample of 1200 cases from different countries and investigate the existence of a temporal association between age at first cannabis use and age of onset of psychosis and to examine the influence of frequency, potency, duration of cannabis use on age of onset of psychosis in FEP with earlier first use of cannabis.

References

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Data needed for the study: Socio-demographic data (MRC Social Scale) and Cannabis

Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).

Plan for statistical analysis (overall strategy):

Linear regression analysis will be used to compare mean ages for two groups (Yes Cannabis and No cannabis FEP).

Among FEP with earlier first use of cannabis, we will compare the age of onset of psychosis between the two groups (heavy users and low-frequency users) using t- test. Next, we will perform factorial ANCOVAs (adjusted for gender and all other relevant confounders) including the different patterns of cannabis use. We will perform corrections for multiple tests. Finally, we will perform a logistic regression to examine the influence of frequency, potency, duration and age of first cannabis use on age of onset of psychosis.

Other analyses/methods: Stratification of the sample by country.

Involvement of external Parties (non EU-GEI): none

IPR check:

Timeframe:

Additional comments: