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AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL COGNITION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MENTAL DISORDERS

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A capital issue in human psychology is how individuals understand the actions and emotions of others. But the field of social cognition includes different concepts: the mirror system (that allows us to understand other people's motor actions and action intentions), "theory of mind" (that allows us to understand more abstract concepts such as beliefs or wishes in others) and empathy (that allows us to understand and share emotions and sensations with others). It is known the difficulties of people with schizophrenia in interpreting social information or the "theory of mind" severe deficit in autistic children, but nowadays social cognition can be a new point of view in understanding different psychopathologies, such as social phobia, pure delusional disorder or personality disorders. In regard to schizophrenia, the association between ToM deficit and negative symptoms and disorganization has been shown, whereas the association with paranoid symptomatology seems to be more controversial. A supplementary line for debate has been whether a ToM deficit is a *state* marker or a *trait* marker in relation to psychosis. In this workshop we will review the importance of this approach and the main -verbal and non-verbal- instruments used to assess social cognition in clinical practice.