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CHILDHOOD ABUSE AND THE BDNF-VAL66MET POLYMORPHISM: EVIDENCE FOR GENE-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT PSYCHOSIS-LIKE EXPERIENCES

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Introduction: The well-established relationship between childhood adversity and psychosis is likely to involve other factors such as genetic variants, which could help to understand why not everyone exposed to adverse events develops psychotic symptoms later in life (Van Winkel, et al. 2008; Simmons et al. 2009).

Aims: The present study investigated the influence of childhood abuse and neglect on positive and negative psychosis-like experiences in adulthood and the potential moderating effect of the BDNF-Val66Met polymorphism.

Method: Psychosis-like experiences and childhood adversity were assessed in 533 individuals from the general population.

Results: Childhood abuse showed a strong independent effect on the positive dimension of psychosis-like experiences ( $B=.16$ ;  $SE=.05$ ;  $p=.002$ ). Furthermore, this association was moderated by the BDNF-Val66Met polymorphism ( $B=.17$ ;  $SE=.09$ ;  $p=.004$ ).

Conclusions: Individuals exposed to childhood abuse are more likely to report positive psychosis-like experiences. Met carriers reported more positive psychosis-like experiences when exposed to childhood abuse than did individuals carrying the Val/Val genotype.

Therefore, the observed gene-environment interaction effect may be partially responsible for individual variation in response to childhood abuse.