



Using multiple approaches to dissect the heterogeneity of psychosis: their promises and challenges

Paola Dazzan

The high clinical and biological heterogeneity of psychosis has made the prediction of outcome difficult. Existing studies have mostly included samples with schizophrenia, with an over-representation of patients with poorer outcomes, and have been confounded by the lack of standardised treatment protocols.

What these studies have shown however is that there are subtle and diffuse brain structural alterations in psychosis, particularly in patients with poorer outcomes. A better definition of the neurobiological subtypes of clinical outcomes can be achieved with data from large epidemiological, multi-centre MRI studies, using integrated clinical trial approaches.

Our evidence from large, longitudinal multicentre epidemiological and neuroimaging studies, from the first episode of psychosis to the first 10 years of illness, suggests that while multiple, integrated approaches can help define subtypes of psychosis, challenges, such as biological heterogeneity, should be addressed in order to identify clinically meaningful neurobiological subtypes of psychosis.