

Cognition studied in children at familial high risk for schizophrenia

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Children at familial high risk (FHR) for schizophrenia have

neurocognitive impairments compared with population-based controls (PBCs), according to a study recently published in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Christina Bruun Knudsen, from the Aarhus University Hospital-Psychiatry in Denmark, and colleagues examined development in specific neurocognitive functions from age 7 to 11 years in children at FHR for [schizophrenia](#) or bipolar disorder compared with a PBC group. Data were obtained from two university hospitals in Denmark.

Four hundred fifty-one children underwent neurocognitive testing at four-year follow-up: 170 at FHR for schizophrenia, 103 at FHR for bipolar disorder, and 178 children in the PBC group. Five hundred twenty children participated in the neurocognitive assessments at age 7 or 11 years or at both assessments and were included in the analyses. The researchers observed no statistically significant time-by-group interactions across the three groups when correcting for multiple comparisons. Children at FHR for schizophrenia showed significant neurocognitive impairment in seven of 24 neurocognitive measures (29.2 percent) compared with the PBC group at four-year follow-up and in five of 24 measures (20.8 percent) compared with children at FHR for bipolar disorder. No significant difference was seen between children at FHR for [bipolar disorder](#) and the PBC group.

"These findings may have the potential to inform [early intervention programs](#) targeting cognitive impairments in [children](#) at FHR of schizophrenia as these impairments may be susceptible to remediation," the authors write.

More information: Christina Bruun Knudsen et al, Neurocognitive Development in Children at Familial High Risk of Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.0465](#)

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