2022

Vol 6. No.S1

ToM decline, MCI or Vascular Disorder

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Abstract

Recent research deals with disorders and deficits caused by vascular syndrome in an effort of prediction and prevention. Cardiovascular health declines with age, due to vascular risk factors, and this leads to an increasing risk of cognitive decline. Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) is defined as the negative cognitive changes beyond what is expected in normal aging. The purpose of the study was to compare older adults with Vascular Risk Factors (VRF), MCI patients, and healthy controls (HC) in social cognition and especially in Theory of Mind ability (ToM). The sample comprised a total of 109 adults, aged 50 to 85 years (M = 66.09, S.D. = 9.02). They were divided into three groups: (a) older adults with VRF, (b) MCI patients, and (c) healthy controls (HC). VRF and MCI did not differ significantly in age, educational level or gender as was the case with HC. Specifically, for assessing ToM, a social inference test was used, which was designed to measure sarcasm comprehension. Results showed that the performance of VRF group and MCI patients is not differentiated, while HC performed higher compared to the other two groups. The findings may imply that the development of vascular disorder affecting vessels of the brain is associated from its "first steps" to ToM decline at least as regards specific aspects of it such as paradoxical sarcasm understanding.

Received: January 27, 2022; Accepted: January 30, 2022; Published: January 31, 2022

Biography

Glykeria Tsentidou is a PhD candidate in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, with object of research, the prediction of cognitive impairment in adults without memory deficits. She has postgraduate studies in Clinical Neuropsychology, and her CV includes extensive clinical and scientific experience. She has received two scholarships from government agencies for her research proposals. During this time, in parallel with her research work, she works as a psychologist at the Health Center in Katerini, and she is teaching staff at the Metropolitan College of Thessaloniki.