Reviewer's report

Title: Executive function does not predict coping with symptoms in patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia

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Reviewer: Daniel Javitt

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting study that goes beyond simple categorization of deficits in schizophrenia and tries to get at the subjective impact of the symptoms. As well, it tests the specific hypothesis that deficits in executive processing contribute to difficulty in symptomatic coping. This is an important hypothesis in that executive processing is one of the most widely studied constructs in schizophrenia research, and is also widely hypothesized at affect outcome. The present study thus provides an objective test of this hypothesis.

The main finding of the study is the lack of association between executive processing measures and coping ability. This is a valuable insight, but one that should be viewed with caution as there is no differential result in the study. Thus, it could be that psychometrics of the MACS are not sufficient for correlations to be observed with any measure. It would be more interesting to know which variables do mediate between symptoms and coping, rather than which do not.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. An issue with the manuscript is that it uses the terms executive processing and cognition interchangeably. Although correlations were not observed with executive processing measures, this does not mean that correlations would not have been observed with other domains, had they been tested.

2. A second limitation of the study is that many of the measures are somewhat idiosyncratic. Several are discussed by reference to a companion article that is presumably being reviewed separately. The manuscript should discuss how the present measures map onto domains assessed with more widespread measures, such as MATRICS battery.

3. A final limitation of the study is that subjects are relatively atypical. As noted, 66% were in remission and mean IQ was 101, which is high for schizophrenia. Some discussion of the potential consequences of this population should be discussed.

Despite these limitations, the study is interesting and sui generis and represents a different and refreshing view on construct interrelationships in schizophrenia.

Minor essential revisions

PANNS should be PANSS.
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests