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Systematic review of the relationship of premorbid functioning and psychosocial outcomes in longitudinal studies of early psychosis

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Premorbid functioning, developmental performance before the onset of psychosis, is a well-known prognostic indicator, but is understudied in relationship to psychosocial outcomes. We set out to investigate these relationships. A systematic review was completed and included studies from 2007 to 2019 that examined premorbid functioning and psychosocial outcomes in early psychosis. Inclusion criteria were: non-affective psychotic disorders verified by a diagnostic system within three years of psychosis. Objective measures of psychosocial functioning and use the Premorbid Adjustment Scale (PAS) to measure pre-illness functioning were required for standardization across studies. Results were grouped by use of the PAS: domain of functioning or developmental approach. Eight studies found significant relationships between premorbid functional domains and longitudinal psychosocial functioning. Social premorbid functioning was a predictor of global and social functional outcomes while academic premorbid functioning was a consistent predictor of occupational outcome. Late adolescence functioning was a significant predictor of occupational outcomes. These results signify the prognostic power of premorbid functioning to psychosocial outcomes in psychosis. Support for the detailed use of the PAS in predicting longitudinal outcomes is provided. These results may inform intervention strategies by individually tailoring psychosocial rehabilitations from premorbid patterns using patient's strengths to support recovery.