

# Mental Health & Human Resilience

July 14-15, 2016 Cologne, Germany

## Pathological imitative tendency in schizoaffective disorder

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Imitative behavior plays a highly important role in our social life, helping us to learn actions and understand the intentions of others. Studies in this field became very popular particularly after discovery of mirror neurons, which are related to the imitative process. Nevertheless, in the case of schizophrenia, imitation can become a pathological process; patients have an abnormal tendency of inappropriate copying of another person's actions. However, it is still unknown if the same tendency occurs in the case of schizoaffective disorder; a borderline mental disease, which has both psychotic and affective symptoms. Therefore, our goal was to study a pathological imitative tendency in people with schizoaffective disorder. In our study 12 schizoaffective disorder patients and 14 healthy subjects were employed in two tasks: In imitative task they had to copy the hand action seen on the screen and In counter-imitative task they had to make a different movement (which involves a suppression of imitative action that is impaired in case of pathological imitative tendency). Imitative tendency was assessed by interference score; a difference between counter-imitative and imitative responses. We also studied the response preparation in both groups. Our results revealed that schizoaffective disorder patients prepared properly not only imitative, but also counter-imitative responses as healthy subjects did. Nevertheless, we detected pathological imitative tendencies in schizoaffective disorder patients. These results suggest that these imitative problems occur in executive, rather than in preparatory stage in schizoaffective disorder. Therefore, our findings can be applied for various clinical purposes.

### Biography

Denisas Dankinas is a PhD student of Neurobiology and Biophysics Department of Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania. He has participated in 5 scientific conferences and published 3 proceedings. He has 1 paper published in reputed journal and 1 paper is under review for the publishing.

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