

To cite this article: K. I. Stordal, A. Mykletun, A. Asbjørnsen, J. Egeland, N. I. Landrø, A. Roness, B. R. Rund, K. S. Sundet, A. J. Lundervold, A. Lund (2005)
General psychopathology is more important for executive functioning than diagnosis
Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica 111 (1), 22–28.
doi:10.1111/j.1600-0447.2004.00389.x

General psychopathology is more important for executive functioning than diagnosis

- *K. I. Stordal*¹,
- *A. Mykletun*²,
- *A. Asbjørnsen*³,
- *J. Egeland*⁴,
- *N. I. Landrø*⁴,
- *A. Roness*¹,
- *B. R. Rund*⁴,
- *K. S. Sundet*⁴,
- *A. J. Lundervold*⁵,
- *A. Lund*¹

- ¹Department of Psychiatry, ²Centre of Health Promotion (HEMIL), Department of Psychology, ³Department of Psychosocial Sciences, University of Bergen, Bergen, ⁴Institute of Psychology, University of Oslo, Oslo and ⁵Department of Biological and Medical Psychology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Kirsten I. Stordal, Haukeland University Hospital, Psychiatric Division, NO-5021 Bergen, Norway.

E-mail: kirsten.irene.stordal@helse-bergen.no

Abstract

Stordal KI, Mykletun A, Asbjørnsen A, Egeland J, Landrø NI, Roness A, Rund BR, Sundet KS, Lundervold AJ, Lund A. General psychopathology is more important for executive functioning than diagnosis. Acta Psychiatr Scand 2005; 111: 22–28. © Blackwell Munksgaard 2004.

Objective: Impaired executive functioning (EF) has often been reported in patients with major depression or schizophrenia. We hypothesize that the variance in EF is more affected by level of general psychopathology than by diagnosis.

Method: Forty-three patients with major depression and 47 with schizophrenia were included. EF was measured with Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, Stroop Colour Word Test, Paced Auditory Serial Addition Test, Digits Backwards and Controlled Oral Word Association Test. The level of general psychopathology was measured with Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale – Expanded and Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale, the General psychopathology subscale.

Results: The level of general psychopathology predicted more of the variance in EF than diagnosis. In multivariate analyses, the effect of general psychopathology on EF was more robust for adjustment for diagnosis than vice versa.

Conclusion: Future research on cognitive functioning in psychiatric patients should include level of general psychopathology to avoid overemphasising effects of diagnoses.