

NORMS - A neuropsychological assessment of social norms knowledge in FTLD: a preliminary study

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Social cognition is increasingly considered as an early marker of bvFTD and its assessment through standardized tests has been included in the new research diagnostic criteria for prodromal bvFTD. However, so far, only a handful of validated tasks are available to perform this evaluation and they are mainly focused on core abilities, i.e. emotion recognition & mentalizing. This last years, the intertwining of semantic memory with social cognition has been highlighted through several studies. Our aim was to develop a new standardized assessment of social norms knowledge and to confirm its usefulness through preliminary data.

24 drawings depicting social scenes containing or not a violation of social norms was conceived. Pre-tests were performed at the University of Cambridge. A final version was employed at the Lille University Hospital by a neuropsychologist. 10 controls, 6 patients with an acquired lesion of the vmPFC, 2 patients with a bvFTD and 2 with a svPPA were asked to report any faux pas committed in each drawing. Scores reporting norm transgression and over-adherence to the norms perceived were calculated for each, together with measures of context understanding.

Context understanding was similar in patients and controls. Norms' transgressions were perfectly identified by all, except bvFTD and svPPA patients. An over-adherence to norms perceived was only observed in vmPFC and bvFTD patients.

These preliminary results tend to validate the design of the task and its inclusion in a proper study aiming to perform its clinical and imaging validation for FTLD.

Conflicts of interest

N/A