

FROM BASIC SYMPTOMS TO PREDICTION AND PREVENTION – G. HUBER’S CONTRIBUTION

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Recent focus on early detection and intervention in psychosis has renewed interest in subtle psychopathology beyond positive and negative symptoms. Such self-experienced sub-clinical disturbances are described in detail in the basic symptom concept by Gerd Huber and Gisela Gross. This review will give an introduction into the concept of basic symptoms and describe the development of the current instruments for their assessment, the Schizophrenia Proneness Instrument, Adult (SPI-A) and Child and Youth version (SPI-CY), as well as of the two at-risk criteria: the at-risk criterion Cognitive-Perceptive Basic Symptoms (COPER) and the high-risk criterion Cognitive Disturbances (COGDIS).

Further, an overview of prospective studies using both or either basic symptom criteria and transition rates related to these will

be given, and the potential benefit of combining ultra-high risk criteria, particularly attenuated psychotic symptoms, and basic symptom criteria will be discussed. Finally, their prevalence in psychosis patients, i.e. the sensitivity, as well as in general population samples will be described.

It is concluded that both COPER and COGDIS are able to identify subjects at a high risk of developing psychosis. Further, they appear to be sufficiently frequent prior to onset of the first psychotic episode as well as sufficiently rare in persons of general population to be considered as valuable for an early detection of psychosis. This way Gerd Huber’s and Gisela Gross’s long-standing and highly systematically conducted basic symptom research laid the foundation for an eminently future-oriented new direction of schizophrenia research.