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Pattern of psychopathology and neurological soft signs among first episode psychotic patients in Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Sokoto

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Aim: To determine the prevalence and pattern of psychopathology and NSS among patients with FEP, and compare the prevalence of NSS with First-Degree Relatives (FDRs) and a healthy control group (HCG).

Methodology*:* A cross-sectional study of 606 participants, of 3groups, namely, participants with FEP, their FDRs and a HCG were consecutively enrolled. Psychopathology was assessed with Psychosis module of Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview and Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale. NSS was assessed with 26-item Neurological Evaluation Scale (NES).

Results*:* Schizophrenia was the most frequent FEP diagnosis (39.1%). The prevalence of NSS in FEP, FDRs and HCG were: 100%, 95.0% and 47.0%, respectively. Participants with antipsychotic-naïve FEP showed 100% prevalence in all components of motor sequencing, more than 70% in all components of sensory integration, and more than 50% in major components of motor coordination and primary NSS. Negative symptoms dimension correlated with number of NSS (r=0.4) and NSS total score (r=0.3), while anxiety/depression dimension correlated negatively with number of NSS (r=-0.3) and NES total score (r=-0.2).
Conclusion*:* The findings of this study underscore the consideration of NSS as a viable marker for FEP.