

A biomarker of schizophrenia opens the door to its prevention

LOCATION: Seville

DURATION: 1'37"

SUMMARY: It is a study conducted by the Department of Animal Behaviour and Neuroscience of the University of Seville. These researchers have identified a biological characteristic that indicates if a person is likely to develop schizophrenia, a mental disorder that affects 1% of the population. They have observed that in patients who suffer from this disorder, the natural startle reaction produced when hearing a loud sound preceded by another less intense is altered. This would allow doctor to treat this disorder before its development and stop it with preventive treatments.

VTR:

BACKGROUND: "The tube enters from here..."

We are in the Department of Animal Behaviour and Neuroscience of the University of Seville. 1% of the population suffers or will suffer schizophrenia. These researchers have identified a biomarker that indicates the presence of this mental disorder. This could allow them to...

GONZALO DE LA CASA
Lead researcher

"Even to apply a preventive treatment to people at high risk of suffering the disease because of their family history or genetic causes..."

But before we discover further details, what is a biomarker?

JUAN CARLOS RUIZ
Researcher

"Physiologically, biologically, there is a certain pattern or mechanism that is going to indicate us the presence or lack of something."

GONZALO DE LA CASA
Lead researcher

"Imagine that your brain works like an orchestra. We use biomarkers to find a specific instrument that doesn't work properly, even when the orchestra apparently sounds good."

These researchers have observed that the natural startle reaction produced when hearing a loud sound preceded by another less intense, is altered in them.

GONZALO DE LA CASA
Lead researcher

"This way, when you expose them to the less intense stimulus followed by the most intense, the alert response is very strong, exactly the same that they experience when you expose them to the intense sound."

Something that occurs in patients who are in the middle of a schizophrenia crisis, but also after overcoming it, and in first degree relatives.

GONZALO DE LA CASA
Lead researcher

"We want to check if the same effect is caused by disorders such as bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, etcetera, etcetera."

Their goal is to treat the disease before its apparition. And they continue working to achieve it. But the day has already ended.

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