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Emotion Recognition in Individuals with Substance Use Disorder

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Facial expressions of emotions are regarded as 'Crown Jewel' of non-verbal communication (Mandal & Awasthi, 2014). This study used a computer based emotion recognition task to compare individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) with normal controls to investigate their ability to recognize facial expressions of six basic emotions (Ekman, 1982) and associated average reaction time to recognize these emotions. A sample comprised 58 men with SUD with means age of 28.66 (*SD* = 4.90) and 50 matched normal controls with mean age of 28.62 (*SD* = 4.79). Based upon studies (e.g. Leshner, 2001, Volkow, 2009) it was assumed that if SUD bring changes in structure and function of brain the emotion recognition ability and average reaction time of the two groups will differ significantly. Between-Within ANOVA indicated that normal controls were significantly better and took significantly lesser average reaction time to recognize facial expressions of emotions as compared to individuals with SUD. The results are discussed in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan.

Keywords: drug addiction, emotion recognition, FEEL Test