

# Impact of Environmental Influence and Vulnerability to Stress in the Development of First Psychotic Episode

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## INTRODUCTION

Some findings in patients with first psychotic episode (FEP) could be related to alterations of stress responses. Alterations of stress response are reflected in the alterations of the HPA axis.

## AIM

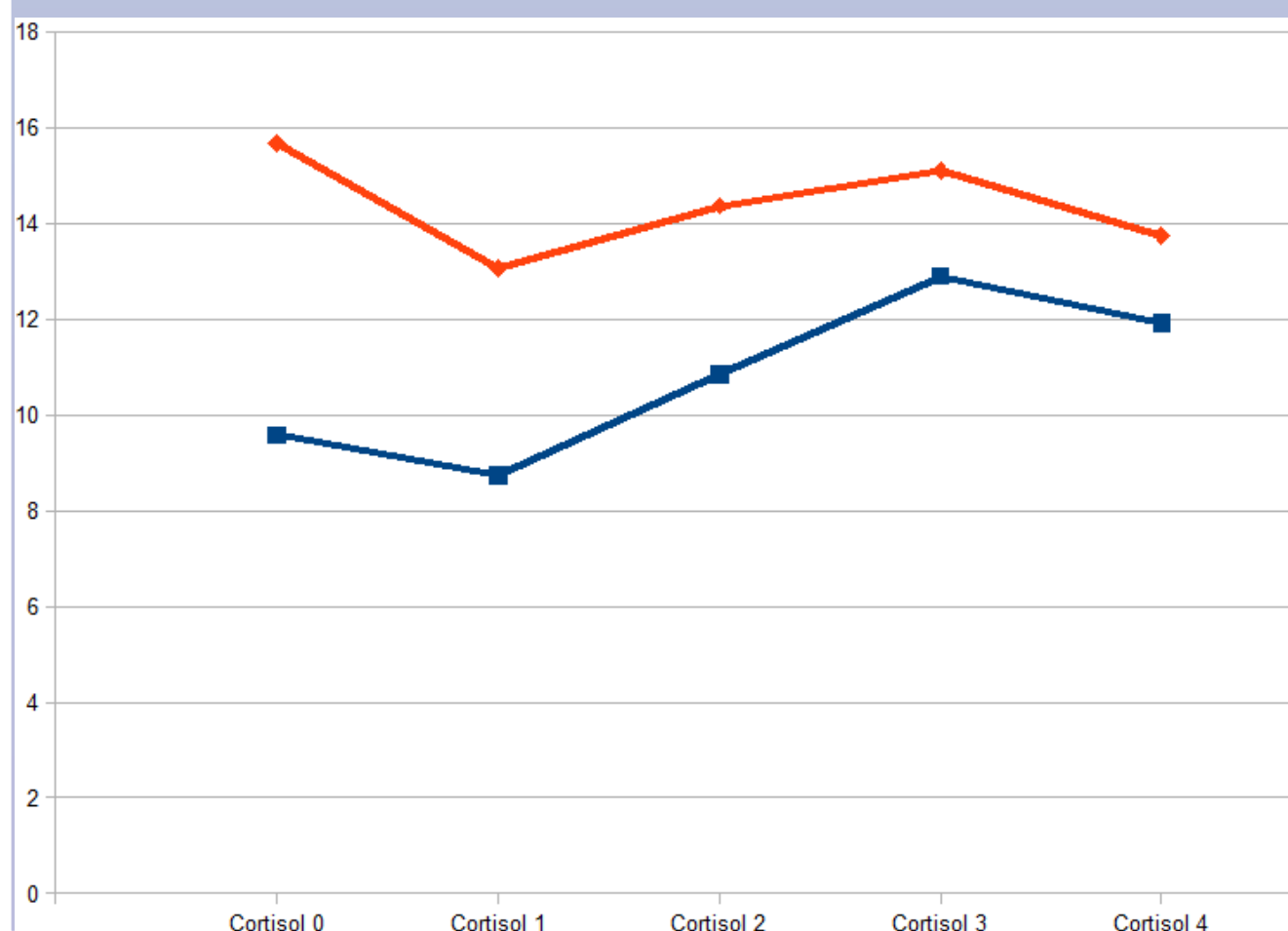
To assess endocrine and autonomic responses to acute psychosocial stress, their associations with onset of the first psychotic episode as well as the influence of the environmental factors.

## METHODS

We have assessed clinical status through clinical psychiatric interviews, standardized psychiatric scales and validated psychological scales, (LEQ, WHOQOL-BREF, PBI, Rosenberg) in 45 subjects with FEP and 50 age and gender matched controls. All participants were then exposed to the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST).

## Chart

TSST results: control group (blue) vs. FEP patients (red).



## RESULTS

Our preliminary findings on a sample of 95 participants indicate differences between patients and controls in salivary cortisol measured in 5 time points during the TSST. Patients with FEP experience more levels of baseline cortisol, and less changes during the stress test than controls. Baseline stress levels indicated in the salivary cortisol levels correlate with perceived self-esteem, psychological and social quality of life.

## CONCLUSION

Our findings support the alterations of stress response, possibly indicating vulnerability to stress in persons with FEP.

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