

Could Bilingualism Contribute To Cognitive And Affective Reserve In Psychosis?

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Bilingualism seems to contribute to cognitive and affective reserve in dementia, and could be a promising avenue of exploration for those aging with psychosis.

INTRODUCTION	METHODS	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS	REFERENCES
Individuals with schizophrenia are at increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia in later life (Adamowicz & Lee, 2023; Cai & Huang, 2018), with substantial heterogeneity in trajectories (Kahn & Keefe, 2013). Cognitive reserve has been proposed as a key factor moderating the clinical expression of neurodegenerative processes (Stern, 2009). In parallel, bilingualism has been associated with increased cognitive reserve and, in some studies, delayed onset of dementia symptoms in the general population (Bialystok et al., 2012). Emerging evidence further suggests that second language (L2) use may support emotional regulation (Ware & Rigaud, 2021), often associated with reduced affective reactivity (Caldwell-Harris, 2015). Clinical observations have described cases in which individuals rely on non-native languages to manage intrusive or overwhelming experiences, as illustrated by Louis Wolfson. While anecdotal, such observations suggest that language switching may support affective regulation.	This developing topic integrates findings from three domains, cognitive reserve and dementia, psychosis, and bilingualism, through a narrative synthesis informed by a structured literature review conducted as a first step toward a systematic review. The concept of affective reserve (Di Rosa, 2024) is introduced to account for the role of psychological resilience in shaping clinical trajectories, particularly in the context of bilingualism (Ware, 2025).	The review identified a limited and heterogeneous body of literature, with no studies directly examining bilingualism as a reserve factor in aging populations with psychosis. Existing evidence suggests that bilingualism is associated with enhanced executive functioning and implicit emotional regulation (Morawetz et al., 2017), including attenuation of affective intensity in L2 contexts. In psychosis, where cognitive and affective dysregulation are central, bilingualism may provide a dual form of reserve, cognitive and affective, potentially moderating vulnerability to decline.	Bilingualism may constitute a complex multidimensional reserve factor in psychosis. Integrating affective regulation into models of cognitive reserve may refine understanding of resilience and dementia risk and inform future research on language-based interventions in cognitive aging.	Adamowicz, D. H., & Lee, E. E. (2023). <i>Dementia among older people with schizophrenia: An update on recent studies</i>. <i>Current Opinion in Psychiatry</i>, 36(3), 150–155. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000861 Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., & Luk, G. (2012). Bilingualism: Consequences for mind and brain. <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences</i>, 16(4), 240–250. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2012.03.001 Cai, L., & Huang, J. (2018). Schizophrenia and risk of dementia: A meta-analysis study. <i>Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment</i>, 14, 2047–2055. https://doi.org/10.2147/NDT.S172933 Caldwell-Harris, C. L. (2015). Emotionality differences between a native and foreign language: Implications for everyday life. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 24(3), 214–219. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414566268 Di Rosa, E. (2024). Affective reserve: A new reserve concept we should talk about. <i>PLOS Mental Health</i>, 1(2), e0000083. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmen.0000083 Kahn, R. S., & Keefe, R. S. E. (2013). Schizophrenia is a cognitive illness: Time for a change in focus. <i>JAMA Psychiatry</i>, 70(10), 1107–1112. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2013.155 Morawetz, C., Oganian, Y., Schlickeiser, U., Jacobs, A. M., & Heekeren, H. R. (2017). Second language use facilitates implicit emotion regulation via content labeling. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>, 8, Article 366. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00366 Stern, Y. (2009). Cognitive reserve. <i>Neuropsychologia</i>, 47(10), 2015–2028. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2009.03.004 Ware, C. (2025). Could bilingualism contribute to affective https://doi.org/10.1002/alz70861_108205
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