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DOES P50 MEASURE CLINICAL SENSORY GATING?

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We have replicated the previous studies showing that patients with schizophrenia have greater P50-amplitude ratio (S2/S1) than normal controls as responses to double-click stimuli (S1–S2). This has been hypothesized to reflect deficits in sensory gating. Despite the extensive replications, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate the behavioral correlates of the P50 phenomenon. In this study, we examined 16 drug-free schizophrenics who reported moderate to severe perceptual anomalies (PA) as compared to 16 normal subjects and 16 patients without PA. We found that patients with PA exhibited P50 patterns that did not differ from normal subjects, while those patients without PA showed the abnormal P50 typically found in schizophrenia. This paradoxical finding may cause reevaluation of the theory that P50 is a measure of sensor gating.