

Module 3: Schizophrenia



<https://depositphotos.com/stock-photos/schizophrenia.html?filter=all&qview=7812091>

Illness description

Schizophrenia is one of **psychotic disorders***, mental disorders characterised by difficulties in distinguish reality from unreal. Person can have sensations, feelings or thoughts that distort the view on what is going on around or within him/her. This can cause difficulties in management of emotions, relation to other people and normal functioning.

Factors that play role in occurrence of schizophrenia

- having particular genes,
- traumatic experience especially in the earliest period of life,
- and damage of the brain that could happen any time during the life span.

Probably, it is caused by an interplay of various biological, psychological and societal factors. This results in impaired function of **neurotransmitters****.

Illness description (continuation)

-Schizophrenia can **develop suddenly or gradually***.

-Most commonly occurs between the ages of 15 and 25. It occurs in about 1% of the population everywhere in the world.

-Risk factors include lower socioeconomic status, lower education, family history of schizophrenia, stressful situations such as the loss of a loved one, violence in the family or the environment.

-Consumption of psychoactive agents can trigger a psychotic episode as well.

-Treatment that encompasses both **biological**** and **psychosocial methods***** is the best choice.



Behaviour and symptoms of schizophrenia

- **Positive symptoms**

- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Confused thinking or disorganised speech
- Movement disorders



- **Negative symptoms**

- Problem in decision making
- Trouble in interpreting others emotions or motives
- Suicidal thoughts
- Loss of interest in things or activities
- Problem with emotions
- Whitdrawal from others

Behaviour to expect

- In schizophrenic patients, we may expect to live occasionally or even most of their time **in their world** without having need to communicate with the environment.
- Social isolation** is one of the main characteristics of the disease.
- It is often **difficult to motivate them** for simple activities such as maintaining hygiene habits.
- Some patients **are not inclined to take medication** or report to a psychiatrist. They often feel that they do not need medication.
- They are often very **stingy in verbal expression**, and emotional expression can be the opposite of usual or appropriate.
- They may **have unusual eating habits**.

Behaviour to expect (continuation)

It is of the utmost importance to recognize the

early signs of a recurrent psychotic episode

- It can be recognized if someone is **listening to voices** **or has visual hallucinations.**
- The **sleep cycle** is often disturbed and is usually the first to be disrupted in relapse of psychotic episode.
- Sometimes the person can show the **signs of suicidality.**
- Many individuals with schizophrenia **rely on the emotional and practical help of family members** to overcome disorder and continue their life.



Concerns about schizophrenia

There are a numerous prejudices about schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is rare condition. In fact it is not true, even 1% of population suffer from schizophrenia.

People with schizophrenia cannot be helped. In fact with adequate treatment 60% schizophrenic patients can live productive lives and have good quality of life.

A schizophrenic patient is irresponsible, like a child. This attitude is at the root of a view that instead of the ill person, somebody else should take care of everything. In fact, there is always a part of the activity that the patient can take care of , even when a psychotic episode is in progress.

People with schizophrenia are dangerous. The fact is that sometimes delusions and hallucinations can lead to violent behavior, but most of the schizophrenic patients are not violent more than common people. In contrary they could be a victim of violence or maltreatment.

Concerns (continuation)

Impact of schizophrenia on the individual

Schizophrenia brings a **change in every segment of the patient's life.**

When the symptoms recede, the patient's environment continues to look at him through his illness, which adds an additional burden to the already diminished social capacity.

There is ongoing medication for which the patient often sees no reason, and which may have unpleasant side effects.

In addition person with schizophrenia can have other mental health problems like depression, anxiety, substance abuse , particular smoking.

The physical health is often compromised in schizophrenic patients as well.

It is a mental disorder that has the **strongest stigmatizing potential.**

Concerns (continuation)

Impact of schizophrenia on family

When a family member becomes ill with schizophrenia, it has a **significant impact on the whole family**.

Family members can have **guilt feeling** for various reasons like feeling of not being good enough parent/ partner or not being able to tolerate symptoms.

The **constant care of taking medication** regularly and going to group therapy often becomes a daily routine for the person who cares for the patient.

Caregiver sometimes have to **take all responsibilities** over the patient and make all decisions for her/him.

In a **case of reoccurrence of symptoms**, the caretaker sometimes has to persuade the patient to go to the psychiatrist, hospital or even need to decide to take some difficult additional measures like contacting services, GPs or police without permission of the ill person.

Do you want to learn more?

Our interactive Resource Pack will give you information about

- concerns that you as caregiver might have
- what can be done
- useful tips how to handle the burden of care
- how to avoid stress and burnout
- how to deal with your emotions
- acceptance of the disorder
- and more!

You will also find exercises and activities for YOU and for the care receiver!



**More information is available
in the Resource Pack:**

https://developfc.csicy.com/?page_id=11708