

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SCHIZOPHRENIA (MENTAL ILLNESS)

What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a serious chronic mental illness. Many people with Schizophrenia are disabled by symptoms. People with Schizophrenia may hear voices which other people do not hear. They may think other people are trying to hurt them. Sometimes they do not make sense when they talk. The disorder makes it hard for them to keep a job or take care of themselves.

Causes of Schizophrenia

- Genes, because the illness runs in family
- The environment, such as viruses and nutrition problems before birth.
- Different brain structure and brain chemistry.

Symptoms of Schizophrenia

- Distortions of a person's normal thinking and functioning.
- Psychotic behaviours - people with these symptoms are sometimes unable to tell what is real from what is imagined
- Hallucinations - when a person sees, hears, smells or feels things that no one else can.
- Delusions - when a person believes things that are not true
- Thought of disorder - ways of thinking that are not usual or helpful and may have trouble organizing their thoughts
- Movement disorder - May appear as agitated body movements and they may repeat certain motions over and over
- They may look like they are depressed - they talk in dull voice, show no facial expression, like a smile or a frown, have trouble having fun, have trouble sticking with activities and talk very little to people even if they need to.
- Have trouble using information to make decisions
- Have trouble paying attention, change friends, have trouble sleeping and are irritable or moody.

How to treat Schizophrenia

- Medication - several types of antipsychotic medications are used for patients with their different symptoms
- Psychosocial treatments - this treatment is helpful after patients find a medication that works which include, drug and alcohol use treatment, family education, illness management skills, rehabilitation, self help group and therapy).



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