

Nursing - schizophrenia and psychosis

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Schizophrenia and Psychosis Schizophrenia Schizophrenia is a brain disorder, which is severe, chronic, and disabling. The disorder affects close to 1% of the Americans. Individuals with the disorder hear voices that other individuals do not hear. At times, they believe that other individuals are controlling their thoughts, planning to harm them, or reading their minds. This can terrify individuals with the disorder and it can make them extremely agitated or withdrawn (National Institute of Mental Health, 2009). Symptoms Schizophrenia symptoms are categorized into cognitive symptoms, negative symptoms, and positive symptoms. Individuals with positive symptoms generally lose touch with the reality. The symptoms are not common in healthy individuals. The symptoms can be severe or hardly noticeable and this depends on whether the person is getting treatment. Positive symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, thought disorders, and movement disorders. Negative symptoms are linked with disruptions to normal behaviors and emotions. The symptoms are very hard to identify as part of the disorder and they can be mistaken for conditions such as depression. Negative symptoms include lack of happiness in everyday life, flat affect, speaking little, and lack of ability to start and maintain planned activities. Cognitive symptoms are slight and like negative symptoms, they can be difficult to identify. Cognitive symptoms include trouble paying attention, poor executive functioning, and difficulties with working memory (National Institute of Mental Health, 2009). Causes and Treatment The causes of schizophrenia are not known and scientists think genes and environment, and different brain structure and chemistry cause it. Schizophrenia treatment focuses on eradicating the disease symptoms. Treatments used

include antipsychotic medications (such as chlorpromazine, haloperidol, perphenazine, and fluphenazine), and other psychosocial treatments.

Psychosocial treatments assist schizophrenia individuals already stabilized by antipsychotic medication to cope with everyday challenges of the disease such as work, communication, self-care, creating and maintaining relationships (National Institute of Mental Health, 2009). Psychosis is a mental condition that is serious but treatable and it is caused by a disturbance in the functioning of the brain. An individual with the condition loses contact with reality and it features changes in the individual's perceptions, behavior, beliefs, and thoughts (Janssen-Ortho, 2009).

Psychosis symptoms are categorized into positive symptoms, negative symptoms, cognitive symptoms, and emotional symptoms.

Delusions and hallucinations are generally referred to as positive symptoms because they express behavior rooted in disordered perceptions, beliefs, and thinking. Other positive symptoms include hostility, agitation, suspiciousness, and grandiosity. On the other hand, apathy, emotional flatness, and social withdrawal are referred to as negative symptoms. They are negative symptoms because they are an outcome of the things (such as communication or social skills) that the disease has taken away from the individual. Cognitive symptoms include thought disorder and poor concentration. Emotional symptoms include depression and blunted emotions. It is important to note that overlapping of the different symptoms can occur and thus, different individuals may experience a combination of symptoms or different symptoms (Janssen-Ortho, 2009). Treatment It is crucial to treat psychosis immediately and antipsychotics are important

drugs used in the treatment. There are numerous antipsychotic medications; the form of medication and the prescribed dose varies from individual to individual. The treatment also depends on the patient factors such as if the condition is first or a recurrent episode and the stage of the disease.

Psychosocial therapy is also important in the treatment of schizophrenia and it usually starts when the acute stage has passed and symptoms start to diminish (Janssen-Ortho, 2009). The Relationship between Schizophrenia and Psychosis As stated earlier, psychosis is a mental condition that impairs the ability of the psychotic patient to differentiate reality from fiction. The disease is characterized by delusions, hallucinations, and problems with communication and behavior. It is usually thought that psychosis is associated with schizophrenia. However, psychosis is also present in varying degrees in several other mental health illnesses. It is important to note that discrete psychotic symptoms “ can be experienced without necessarily being part of a psychotic disorder. If the symptoms are severe enough, or there are multiple symptoms co-occurring for a sufficient time, then a psychotic disorder, such as schizophrenia, may be diagnosed” (National Drug Strategy, 2009, p22). Schizophrenia is a diagnosed using criterion such as the individual experiencing two or more symptoms (such as hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized speech) for a considerable time in a month, occupational or social dysfunction, and constant signs of disturbance for six months (National Drug Strategy, 2009). Psychosis is only related to schizophrenia when its symptoms become very severe or the symptoms co-occur for a considerable length of time. References Janssen-Ortho. (2009). Symptoms of psychosis and schizophrenia. Ontario, Canada: Author. National

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