

Understanding schizophrenia:

Symptoms and treatment

Schizophrenia is a chronic, complex, severe brain disorder



Schizophrenia disrupts a person's normal thoughts, speech and behaviour¹

Without proper treatment, schizophrenia is a persistent and detrimental condition that increases mortality and impacts more than just the patient¹⁻⁴

Today, it impacts more than **3.7 million people**⁵

across Europe, and for those living with the condition, symptoms can be severe and disabling and can impact all aspects of their daily life. The stigma surrounding schizophrenia means patients are often misunderstood and struggle to maintain key relationships and daily activities.^{3,4,6} These include:



Work or study



Autonomous living



Social relationships

The symptoms of schizophrenia vary from one individual to another



They are generally categorised into four areas:^{1,7-10}



POSITIVE SYMPTOMS

Delusions, hallucinations, thought disorders and disordered movement



AFFECTIVE SYMPTOMS

Depressed mood; anxiety; loss of sleep and appetite; and thoughts of death or suicide



NEGATIVE SYMPTOMS

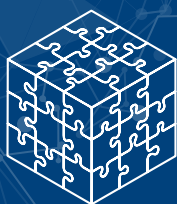
Emotional flatness or lack of expression, social withdrawal, loss of motivation, loss of interest



COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

Difficulties with concentration and memory, including lack of attention, facial recognition and verbal fluency

Schizophrenia is not usually considered as a classic neuro-degenerative disease



Schizophrenia is associated with progressive atrophic changes in the brain.¹¹

Physiological differences result in reduced neurone connectivity



Neurons of a healthy individual



Neurons of a person with schizophrenia

Beyond this vast impact on the individual, schizophrenia also places a considerable social and financial burden on health systems, families and society in general.¹²⁻¹⁵

People with schizophrenia:

1. Are male or female, however men tend to be diagnosed at a younger age¹⁶
2. Are more likely to be homeless – studies estimate that between 2 and 45% are homeless³
3. Have a 2.4x higher mortality risk⁶
4. Have a 10x higher suicide risk¹⁷

Understanding schizophrenia: Symptoms and treatment

There is no single cause of schizophrenia

There are no specific laboratory tests for diagnosing psychiatric disorders

It is thought to be influenced by a combination of factors:¹



Genes



Environment

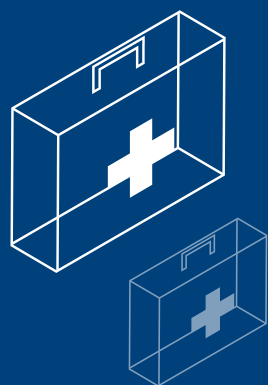


Psychosocial factors



A doctor can diagnose schizophrenia in a patient by determining whether they have met a number of set criteria, which include a range of symptoms and disease duration, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).¹⁸

Schizophrenia is typically a lifelong condition, but there are treatments that can be beneficial



Clinical guidelines recommend that the optimal treatment is a combination of antipsychotic medication along with psychotherapy, psychoeducation and self-help.¹⁹ Effective treatment may allow people with the condition to enjoy a fulfilling life, which may include returning to work or study, independent living and social relationships, which in turn can aid their recovery.

Talking therapies/psychoeducation for the treatment of schizophrenia can include:



Cognitive behavioural therapy



Supportive therapy



Combination of cognitive and supportive therapy



The available antipsychotic medications for maintenance treatment of schizophrenia can be split broadly into two types: daily oral and long-acting treatments (LATs) e.g. those that can be administered fortnightly, monthly or four times a year.²⁰

- **Daily oral medication needs to be taken regularly, but allows people with schizophrenia to administer their own treatment**
- **LATs need to be administered by a healthcare professional, but help to remove the burden of daily medication reminders for the person with schizophrenia and their carer**

For more information or support

Schizophrenia24x7

www.schizophrenia24x7.com

Developed by Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Schizophrenia24x7 is a resource for patients, carers and healthcare professionals who are affected or know someone who is affected by schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder

GAMIAN

www.gamian.eu

The Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe (GAMIAN-Europe) is a patient-driven pan-European organisation that represents the interests of persons affected by mental illness and advocates for their rights

EUFAMI

www.eufami.org

The European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI) is a democratic organisation committed to improving care and welfare for people affected by mental illness

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