



SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

August 2020

What is absconding?

Absconding refers to the departure of patients from hospital wards without permission. The definition of absconding can vary depending on the length of time required for an absence to be considered absconding (e.g. one hour or when they are first noticed missing), and on the method of departure (e.g. leaving a locked ward, leaving the hospital grounds, or failing to return from day leave). Absconding status is influenced by the patient's admission, whether it be voluntary, involuntary, or legally detained. There are significant implications of absconding for patients, carers and other family members.

What is the evidence for absconding?

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests inpatients who abscond are often young men in the first three weeks following admission. Absconding may occur in up to 34% of admissions, and up to 80% of absconders return within 24 hours. A large proportion of absconders indicate intent to leave, and most commonly abscond directly from the ward. There is insufficient evidence regarding interventions for preventing absconding.

For more information see the technical table



NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.