



SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

August 2020

How is age at onset important to people with schizophrenia?

Differences are observed in the age of onset of psychotic symptoms, which may be influenced by genetic or environmental risk factors, or sex. Understanding the factors that impact on age at the onset of symptoms could lead to better understanding of the risk factors for the disorder and earlier and improved intervention strategies.

What is the evidence for age at onset of psychosis?

Moderate to high quality evidence finds the incidence (i.e. new cases) of schizophrenia is higher in males up until around 40 years of age, then higher in females after around 50 years of age.

Substance use, in particular cannabis, is associated with an earlier age at onset of psychosis, with no effect of tobacco use. There was also a small effect of an earlier age at onset in people with a family history of psychosis.

Moderate quality evidence finds small associations between an earlier age at onset and more hospitalisations, more negative, but not positive symptoms, more relapses, poorer overall functioning and poorer overall clinical outcomes (in males only).

Moderate to low quality evidence finds an earlier age at first contact with services in males compared to females in Western countries (small effect).

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.