



NeuRA

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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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What are the issues concerning parental age for people with schizophrenia?

Advanced parental age may increase the risks for the development of schizophrenia in the offspring. Commonly offered explanations have been the occurrence of germline mutations (that is, mutations that occur in the egg or sperm) in older adults, and/or psychological factors such as experiencing parental death at a vulnerable age. Pinpointing the age at which parenthood may be associated with a significantly higher risk of developing schizophrenia could be useful knowledge for potential parents, particularly if there is a pre-existing increased genetic risk of developing the disorder (ie; family history).

What is the evidence regarding parental age as a risk factor for schizophrenia?

Moderate to high quality evidence suggests an increased risk of schizophrenia in adulthood when paternal age was over 35 years at birth, with risk greatest with paternal age over 54 years. Moderate quality evidence also suggests an increased risk when paternal age was less than 20 to 25 years.

Moderate quality evidence finds small, significant effects of increased risk of schizophrenia spectrum or non-affective psychosis in adulthood when maternal age at birth was under 20 years or between 30-34 years. A small, significant effect of decreased risk of schizophrenia spectrum or non-affective psychosis in adulthood was found when maternal age at birth was between 20-29 years.

For more information see the technical table



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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.

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