SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

March 2019

What is the ventricular system?

The ventricular system of the brain functions to provide support to surrounding tissues with cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), produced in the choroid plexus tissue lining many of the ventricles. The system comprises the bilateral cerebral lateral ventricles, the midline third and fourth ventricles, and the central canal of the spinal cord. The lateral ventricles have four sections, the frontal (anterior) horns; temporal (inferior) horns; body; and occipital (posterior) horns. The interventricular foramen connects the lateral ventricles to the third ventricle, and the cerebral aqueduct connects the third ventricle to the fourth. The fourth ventricle is continuous with the central canal in the spinal cord, as well as three subarachnoid foramina allowing CSF to surround the brainstem and cortices.

What is the evidence for changes in the ventricular system?

Moderate to high quality evidence suggests significant increases in ventricular volume in people with first-episode or chronic schizophrenia, which may increase over time. Right and left temporal horn are also increased. First-degree relatives of people with schizophrenia have reduced third ventricle volume compared to people without schizophrenia.

For more information see the technical table

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