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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

February 2019

How is employment related to schizophrenia?

Employment rates are typically low and can be used as a measure of social disability in schizophrenia. Employment function is commonly assessed using outcomes such as rates of employment, success in getting and keeping employment, as well as patient characteristics and the treatments they receive. Low rates of employment among people with schizophrenia places extended burden on social support and disability services, and significantly affects quality of life. Employment rates may be improved by greater focus on patient education and opportunities for supported employment.

What is the evidence for employment?

Reviews with moderate or moderate to high quality evidence show people with schizophrenia are less likely to attain employment and retain it after 3 months than people with other mental disorders. Rates of employment vary considerably, ranging from 4% to 60% in Europe, and from 13% to 80% in the developing world. Rates of employment after a first episode of psychosis range from 13% to 65%. Being employed is consistently related to reductions in outpatient psychiatric treatment and in improved self-esteem, and inconsistently related to fewer psychiatric hospitalisations, less medication, better life satisfaction, and improved wellbeing.

Reviews with moderate or moderate to low quality evidence suggest receiving public support or disability income, having negative symptoms such as social withdrawal, or being young are related to lower rates of competitive employment. Other barriers to employment include illness stigmatisation, economic disincentives, low self-esteem, and poor cognitive functioning. Factors related to higher rates of employment include being married or being in a defacto relationship, receiving medical treatment, or having a work history.

Reviews with moderate or moderate to low quality evidence suggest overall vocational interventions are beneficial for improving employment rates and work function in people with schizophrenia.

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/schizophrenia**.

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