



NeuRA

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SCHIZOPHRENIA LIBRARY

SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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How is substance use related to schizophrenia?

Substance use is more common in people with schizophrenia than in the general population.

What is the evidence for substance use as a risk factor for schizophrenia?

Tobacco

Moderate quality evidence finds the prevalence of smoking in people with first-episode psychosis is around 60%. Moderate to low quality evidence suggests people with first-episode psychosis smoked tobacco for an average of 5.3 years prior to the first psychotic episode. Compared to general population smoking rates, there is a large effect of more smoking in males with schizophrenia, and a medium-sized effect of more smoking in females with schizophrenia. There is also an earlier age of psychosis onset in smokers compared to non-smokers. Compared to males with other mental illnesses, there is a medium-sized effect of more smoking in males with schizophrenia, with no significant differences between females.

Cannabis

High quality evidence shows there is an increased risk of psychotic symptoms with cannabis use. Moderate to high quality evidence suggests this is a dose-dependent relationship for psychotic symptoms, or a diagnosis of any psychotic disorder. Moderate to high quality evidence suggests prevalence of cannabis use in people with first-episode psychosis is around 34-38%. Initiation of cannabis use is around 6-7 years prior to onset of psychosis, and continuation of cannabis use declines after treatment. Moderate to low quality evidence indicates a relationship between cannabis use and increased relapse or re-hospitalisation, and less treatment adherence in people with schizophrenia or psychotic symptoms.

Other substances

Moderate quality evidence suggests a medium-sized increase in prevalence and incidence of subclinical psychotic symptoms in people with alcohol or other drug use.

For more information see the technical table



NeuRA

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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.