

## Effects of Schizophrenic Parents on their children- A Review

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### Abstract

More than 100 years, the concept of Schizophrenia has not been completely explained. Still the exact cause for Schizophrenia has not yet been found out and illustrated completely. Due to parents who are suffering from Schizophrenia, their children are prone to psychiatric disorders. Their children are on a high risk to psychopathology. This article deals with the origin and symptoms of Schizophrenia. Due to the mental illness of the parents, the children face difficulty in trusting their instincts, feel devalued and dismissed, make concessions and make connections, live in utter sorrow and distress and they themselves become their own health-care provider. If the psychosis is not treated for a longer duration, it leads to poor remission status, exhibit a very level of negative and positive symptoms and difficulty in social and general functioning and impairs the quality of life of the schizophrenic parent. Finally, it concludes by stating that there is a need to promote a good mental healthcare benefit to the young generation whether they are prone to mental disorders or without these disorders.

*Keywords:* schizophrenic parents, children, social support

### Introduction

Schizophrenic syndrome is considered as abnormalities occurring in the human mind. The main factors leading to this syndrome are interhemispheric fibres and callosal which equally contribute to malfunctioning of human brain. Many evolutionary theories states that schizophrenia arises due to other evolutionary actions, exposure to modern environments, a result arising due to mutations. Due to parents who are suffering from Schizophrenia, their children are prone to psychiatric disorders. Their children are on a high risk to psychopathology. If the psychosis is not treated for a longer duration, it leads to poor remission status, exhibit a very level of negative and positive symptoms and difficulty in social and general functioning and

impairs the quality of life of the schizophrenic parent. Of late there is a need to promote a good mental healthcare benefit to the young generation whether they are prone to mental disorders or without these disorders.

### **Origin and symptoms of Schizophrenia**

More than 100 years, the concept of Schizophrenia has not been completely explained. Still the exact cause for Schizophrenia has not yet been found out and illustrated completely. Thus, the concept of Schizophrenia has remained only as a hypothesis [1] Earlier schizophrenia was perceived as the way to “lose one’s mind”. Earlier it was called as “madness” but today it is referred as diagnosis of schizophrenia [2]. In 1887, it was first recognised as a severe mental illness by Emil Kraepelin. He termed it as “dementia preacox”. It was in 1911; the word Schizophrenia was first used by Eugen Bleuler [3] Schizophrenic syndrome is considered as abnormalities occurring in the human mind. The main factors leading to this syndrome are interhemispheric fibres and callosal which equally contribute to malfunctioning of human brain [4]. Many evolutionary theories states that schizophrenia arises due to other evolutionary actions, exposure to modern environments, a result arising due to mutations [5] Males develop these symptoms earlier than females. Males showcase major negative symptoms as well as cognitive deficits related with neurophysiological and major structural brain abnormalities. Females exhibit more persecutory delusions and auditory hallucinations. No other sex differences would arise in the history of families comprising of the signs of neurological softness, obstetric complications and minor anomalies physically [6]. Due to the adaptation disorders, there arise the psychotic syndromes. Usually, it is stated that it arises through heredity. But there are other factors which leads to this disorder such as adversity in early life, minority position in the groups, rising up in a more sophisticated urban environment and cannabis usage. These exposures have a serious impact on “social” brain especially during sensitive issues. Thus, we cannot fully confirm that heredity is only a major cause that leads to the mental disorder [7]. Schizophrenia is considered as a severe aspect which frustrates the condition of human mind. The concept of schizophrenic problems is the main item under study by many people such as biochemists, geneticists, anthropologists, sociologists, epidemiologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and physicians. Some state that schizophrenia is of a recent origin amongst the human population while some advocate that this has been existing continuously in the human history. No one can deny the fact that schizophrenia is mainly due to the genetic source [8].

## Children of Schizophrenic parents

The children of schizophrenic parents have a high vulnerability for the occurrence of schizophrenia on them. These children face obstetrical complications. This is mainly due to developmental deviations and neuro motor deficits [9]. Schizophrenia is due to the defects in various combinations dealing with social influences, organic and genetic factors. The children of schizophrenic parents lack to possess a self-identity, devoid of a proper ego boundaries and disturbed image in their body. They lack a proper behaviour affecting their thinking and feeling. They face a disfunctioning of their psychological wellbeing and impairs their existence in the society. They also face disturbances in the volume, stress, pitch, intonation or content in their language. These children have a more inclination to withdraw in social relationships which impairs their ability to empathize [10]. Parents who are battling their life owing to mental illness, negatively impairs their children's physical health, psychology and social adjustment than with those children whose parents are not suffering with mental illness. Compared to the general population, most of the researches have shown that these schizophrenic's parent offspring develop problems related to their emotional, development and behavioural activities. These families face a high risk due to the financial crisis, lack of social and leisure activities, family interruption, housing problems, segregation and interfering their children's schooling. These children feel lonely, worried about their parent's health and feel that they have to take more effort to look after their parents. The lifestyle and mental health get affected amongst these children whose parents are suffering from mental illness [11]. Even if one parent had illness, many children face many problems related with school, spending major time sitting at home itself, less interaction with their relatives and faced a major psychiatric disturbance. These children do not get frequently accessible to the services and get irritated when they visit the hospitals. There is a major need for a proper educational programme and these children need a proper support. Hence, there is a necessity for a conducive co-ordinated approach for both the child and adult related to the services of mental health in order to provide the needs for their betterment in life [12]. The children of schizophrenic parent have a wide range of problems which can be categorized into two, namely as "externalizing" and "internalizing". The various symptoms of internalizing are anxiety, depression, somatic complaints, withdrawn behaviour and shyness. The externalizing symptoms are unstable responsiveness emotionally, delinquent behaviour, aggressive and acting out [13]. The parenting gets affected with those family who have a mental illness. There will be disturbance at home environment which adversely impair

the growth and development of the child. Most of the children have speech deficits and cognitive decline and they also face difficulty to form good relations with their peers. This mainly arises due to marital conflict and economic instability in the family environment. The child lacks help with reference to daily activities which involves getting nutrition, getting prepared to go to school and also face communication lag. Hence, the father has to fulfil balancing the responsibilities. This leads to burnout and stress for the father which impairs his wellbeing. The relationship between the outcome of mental health amongst the children and mental illness of a mother is said to be negatively correlated. Initially these children face emotional and social symptoms in their young age but in their later life they may inherit mood disorders. These children exhibit a very low level of intelligence. These children have a poor inter personal relationship owing to a schizophrenic mother. They feel socially embarrassed and hide the fact about their parent's mental illness. A schizophrenic mother will not be able to develop her child mentally strong [14].

### **Impacts of Schizophrenic Parents on parenting**

Due to the mental illness of the parents, the children face difficulty in trusting their instincts, feel devalued and dismissed, make concessions and make connections, live in utter sorrow and distress and they themselves become their own health-care provider. There will not be an ideal family relationship professionally. The parents even want their health-care professionals to help both their children and themselves [15]. Parents of schizophrenic disorder face loss of custody of their offspring. These parents are victimized twice, once by their psychotic illness and then by protectively removing their children. This causes a huge distress and grief to both of them. There is a high risk of losing the child for a mother especially during the postpartum period. There is also a high risk of events to occur again during the reproductive phase. There would be competency imperfectness instruments in parenting; they mainly focus on their deficits rather than focusing on their positive strengths; they are also prone to biasedness culturally. Most of the married women are having difficulty of losing their life partners. The women suffering from the mental illness face difficulty in social integration with respect to their community members, friends and families. Young mothers get entangled themselves and find very difficult to nurse their children from the network of problems due to their illness [16]. The schizophrenic women always have a very low-quality level of parenting. The parenting of mother's practices affects their children's social and intellectual competence which supports the transmission of

psychopathology to child from their mother [17]. Due to a schizophrenic parent, the environment in the family will be disharmonious. Even the individual personality would be affected amongst the children. The socio-economic status of a schizophrenic parent negatively affects the development of a child [18]. The children of schizophrenic parents' experience fear, loss and stress. They experience verbal aggression, violence and withdrawal making them difficulty to lead their life. They also face emotional distress [19].

### **Repercussions of untreated schizophrenia amongst the parents**

If the psychosis is not treated for a longer duration, it leads to poor remission status, exhibit a very level of negative and positive symptoms and difficulty in social and general functioning and impairs the quality of life of the schizophrenic parent [20]. If the psychosis is not treated on time, then there is a long mean duration. They face unemployment and a reduced global and social functioning. Amongst the males with longer duration of untreated psychosis often prone to remain single and are more prone to relapse of schizophrenic symptoms [21]. If the women having illness is not treated, then there is a high chance of sexual risk behaviour, unwanted pregnancies and coerced sex. This leads to a high incidence of obstetric complications and loss of their offspring. Schizophrenic mothers have a low ability to comprehend their child's cues and have a weak support of social networks [22]. Schizophrenic pregnant woman faces untoward effects on the development of their foetus. There is a high risk of low birth weight and prematurity of the infants [23].

### **Importance of Mental Health**

Mental health is defined as a "state of wellbeing in which a person can use his or her own abilities and cope with the normal stresses of life. Due to social disconnection and social inequality, it leads to a very low level of mental health. A good mental health leads to a good-socio-economic and human development. The concepts which connect a proper mental health consists of a resilience, a broader concept and a good wellbeing. Resilience can be defined as how the person regains his health after being exposed to adversity. Through a proper accessibility to work and education and safety, there would be a good impact on resilience and also on mental health. Through proper actions related to mental health, we can prevent and treat the mental health problems. Slowly, there is a need to promote the mental health [24] In the Global Burden of Diseases, it is about 14 percent of the people having prone to neuropsychiatric disorders mainly due to depression and other mental disorders and psychoses. But in reality, it is the mental

disorders which have often been underestimated. Due to mental disorders, there is a high risk for non-communicable and communicable diseases. Hence, there is a need to evaluate and develop psychosocial interventions that integrates both the non-communicable and communicable diseases. More importance should be given to improve health-care mainly focussing on mental health. There is a need to introduce a proper budget for Mental Health in the country [25]. Of late there is a need to promote a good mental healthcare benefit to the young generation whether they are prone to mental disorders or without these disorders. A person is said to possess a sound mental health if he leads a normal life and productively function the activities. To achieve this, there are so many possible ways: a good quality of life, good meaningful life, sexual health, physical health, good family relationships, social skills, self-management strategies, behaviours, emotions, academic/occupational performance, cognitive skills, self-perceptions and values, attitude mainly towards combating mental disorders and providing literacy in mental health [26].

## Conclusion

Due to the mental illness of the parents, the children face difficulty in trusting their instincts, feel devalued and dismissed, make concessions and make connections, live in utter sorrow and distress and they themselves become their own health-care provider. There would be a negative impact especially on the offsprings whose parents are suffering from mental illness. But due to a good system of support, it can have a very positive effects on those parents who develop a resilience later. Through proper actions related to mental health, we can prevent and treat the mental health problems.

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