

Improving real-life functioning in schizophrenia: Factors to be addressed

Armida Mucci

Department of Mental and Physical Health and Preventive Medicine

University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli

Naples, Italy

Cognitive deficits and negative symptoms are core features of schizophrenia, occurring in a large proportion of affected subjects and enduring more than other psychopathological dimensions over time, including during periods of clinical stability. Both domains of impairment have an unfavorable impact on real-life functioning and quality of life of people with of schizophrenia.

Furthermore, unlike positive symptoms and disorganization, cognitive dysfunction and negative symptoms are poorly responsive to treatment with available antipsychotics.

As demonstrated by the two large studies carried out by the Italian Network for Research on Psychoses, cognitive impairment, negative symptoms, functional capacity and everyday life skills have a strong influence on several domains of real-life functioning.

People with schizophrenia, in all stages of the disorder, require a detailed assessment of negative symptoms, cognitive impairment in social and non-social domains and of their practical skills to meet the demands of everyday life.

The systematic assessment of these domains in routine clinical care will allow the implementation of personalized integrated pharmacological and psychosocial interventions to ensure the highest possible level of real-life functioning and quality of life.

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I have been a consultant and/or advisor to or received honoraria from Gedeon Richter Bulgaria, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Lundbeck, Otsuka, Pfizer and Pierre Fabre; I am also the inventor of a patent owned by Pierre Fabre in the field of schizophrenia treatment.