

TITLE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Abstract

Schizophrenia is a chronic mental illness affecting 3.3 per 1,000 persons globally. The role of genetics and substances in the development of the condition has been widely discussed. This paper focuses on exploring the relationship between childhood trauma and the development of schizophrenia.

Keywords: schizophrenia; childhood trauma; aetiology

Introduction

Schizophrenia is a chronic psychiatric illness with presence of delusions, hallucinations, disorganised speech and/or behaviour and negative symptoms. It is mental health disease with low prevalence of 3.3 per 1,000 persons. In 2013, schizophrenia was ranked as the 11th leading cause of disability globally (Teoh SL, et al. 2017).

As in other mental illnesses, the cause of the condition cannot be pinpointed to one factor. The most likely scenario is that a few factors interact with one another and play some role on the development of this condition. The role of genetics that predisposes a person to getting schizophrenia and the role of substances such as cannabis in precipitating the condition has been widely discussed. However, the role of social factors such as childhood trauma in the development of schizophrenia has not. The aim of this paper is to discuss the relationship between childhood trauma and the development of schizophrenia.

Case Summary

Ms. A, a 66-year-old Indian lady was diagnosed with schizophrenia 30 years ago. She is at present maintained with medications. However, she is frequently readmitted due to relapse.

She is married and has 5 children. She currently lives with her husband and her youngest son, who also has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Her husband is verbally abusive towards her and the son. He is frequently yelling at them, punishing them for being “abnormal”. Her youngest son had just been released from prison for attacking her husband. The patient also has history of abuse as a child, in which her father was physically and verbally abusive towards patient and her mother.