

Original Research Articles

Outcome of Schizophrenia: A Ten-Year Study of a Sample of Egyptian Patients

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the syndromal and functional outcomes and predictors of outcome in a sample of patients with schizophrenia 10 years later. **Method:** The sample included 75 patients aged 18-55 years, with diagnosis of schizophrenia according to DSM-III-R criteria, admitted in a private hospital in Cairo, Egypt in 1989. Their hospital records were examined, diagnosis reviewed and the patients were interviewed to determine their overall outcome, actual occupational and residential statuses (functional outcome), their clinical outcome, as well as their quality of life. Possible predictors of outcome were detected. **Results:** The results of this study on the outcome of schizophrenic patients showed that 25.3% were self-supportive (favourable outcome) with regards to functional outcome, as measured by the Residential and Occupational outcome scale; whereas 23.6% were "improved" with regard to psychopathological syndromal outcome and 28% were symptom free at follow up (Total 52%). There were no significant differences between male and female subjects with regard to current functional outcome. Age at onset and symptom severity at index episode were significantly correlated with poorer outcome. **Conclusion:** Less than one third of patients with schizophrenia had a good/fair overall outcome at 10 years, 25.3% had favourable functional outcome and 28% were symptom-free at follow up (clinical outcome).

Key Words: Schizophrenia outcome, Clinical outcome, Prognosis

Introduction

Ever since the formulation of the concept of "schizophrenia", its course and outcome have attracted considerable attention in view of the psychological, social and economic burden it entails both for the patients and their families. In Egypt, schizophrenia is the commonest chronic variety of psychosis and represents the bulk of inpatients in mental hospitals. In 1989, Egyptian adults between 18 and 55 years constituted about 48% of the total population (28,800,000) (Capmas, et al, 1996). With an average prevalence of schizophrenia ranging between 0.85 - 3% the number of schizophrenic cases would be expected to exceed 550,000 individuals. Controversy over the outcome of schizophrenia (generally good or generally poor) still persists where the findings of long-term prognosis of the illness differ, sometimes dramatically. There is recognition of a wide variety of factors contributing to the course of schizophrenia (Kane, et al, 1995). The contribution of such factors needs to be evaluated, especially as they contribute to different outcomes. Studying the long-term course of schizophrenia is not

only useful in informing diagnostic practice, but also to develop etiological hypotheses or to construct and revise prognostic models, as well as to illuminate individual, environmental and illness contributions to outcome (Gaebel, et al, 2000). Most outcome studies of schizophrenia have been conducted in Western Europe and the US (Hegarty, et al, 1994).

The present study, to the best of the authors' knowledge is the first 10-year follow-up study on schizophrenia in Africa and the Middle East.

Aim of the study

This study was carried out aiming to describe the long-term outcome of schizophrenia in a sample of Egyptian patients and to study the relationship between different dimensions of outcome, namely psychopathological symptoms, psychosocial adjustment and quality of life, and to identify the wide variety of factors contributing to the course of the illness in order to sort out the most significant risk factors affecting the outcome of schizophrenia in the studied sample.