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How schizophrenia manifests and impacts mental health: A clinical and homoeopathic perspective

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Abstract

Schizophrenia is a severe, chronic psychiatric disorder characterized by disturbances in thought, perception, emotion, and behavior. It profoundly affects personal, social, and occupational functioning. Despite advances in psychiatry, schizophrenia continues to pose diagnostic and therapeutic challenges due to its heterogeneous presentation and relapsing nature. This article explores the clinical features, etiological factors, neurobiological mechanisms, and psychosocial dimensions of schizophrenia, with special emphasis on homoeopathic case-taking and management. The importance of early recognition, holistic assessment, and individualized treatment is highlighted.

Keywords: Schizophrenia, psychosis, delusions, hallucinations, homoeopathy, mental health

Introduction

Schizophrenia is one of the most complex and disabling mental disorders, affecting approximately 1% of the global population. It typically begins in late adolescence or early adulthood and follows a chronic course with periods of exacerbation and remission. The disorder disrupts the very core of human experience—thinking, perception, self-identity, and emotional expression.

For the homoeopathic physician, schizophrenia represents not merely a disease of the brain but a profound derangement of the vital force affecting the mind and body as a whole. Understanding schizophrenia holistically is essential for meaningful therapeutic intervention.

Clinical features of schizophrenia

1. Positive symptoms

These represent an excess or distortion of normal functions: Delusions (persecutory, grandiose, religious, somatic) hallucinations (most commonly auditory) disorganized speech grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior.

2. Negative symptoms

These reflect a loss or diminution of normal functions: Affective flattening alogia (poverty of speech) avolition (lack of motivation) social withdrawal anhedonia.

3. Cognitive symptoms

Impaired attention and concentration. Poor working memory. Reduced executive functioning. Difficulty in planning and decision-making

Etiological factors

Schizophrenia is a multifactorial disorder involving an interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors:

Genetic vulnerability: Strong familial aggregation

Neurodevelopmental factors: Prenatal infections, birth complications

Neurochemical imbalance: Dopamine dysregulation

Psychosocial stressors: Trauma, urban living, social isolation

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Substance use: Cannabis and psychoactive drugs

Neurobiological mechanisms

Research suggests abnormalities in: Dopaminergic pathways (mesolimbic and mesocortical) Glutamate neurotransmission. Structural brain changes (ventricular enlargement, cortical thinning) Impaired neural connectivity. These changes contribute to distorted perception of reality and impaired cognition.

Phases of schizophrenia

Prodromal phase: Social withdrawal, anxiety, suspiciousness

Acute phase: Prominent psychotic symptoms.

Residual phase: Persistence of negative and cognitive symptoms. Early intervention during the prodromal phase can significantly improve prognosis. Impact on Individuals and Families.

Schizophrenia places a heavy burden on

Patients (loss of insight, stigma, disability) Families (emotional stress, caregiving burden) Society (economic cost, reduced productivity) Stigma and lack of awareness often delay treatment, worsening outcomes.

Clinical implications for homoeopathic practice

Homoeopathy views schizophrenia as a deep-seated constitutional disorder requiring careful individualization.

Case-taking considerations

Detailed mental symptoms (delusions, fears, impulses). Emotional responses and behavior patterns. Sleep, appetite, and circadian rhythm. Triggers, stressors, and life events. Family history and miasmatical background. Differentiation. Distinguish between functional psychosis and organic causes. Differentiate schizophrenia from mood disorders with psychotic features

Commonly indicated remedies

Hyosciamus: Jealousy, suspicion, obscene behavior

Stramonium: Fear, violence, religious delusions

Anacardium: Dual will, suspiciousness, lack of confidence

Sulphur: Philosophical delusions, neglect of appearance

Natrum muriaticum: Social withdrawal, silent grief

Remedy selection must always be based on the totality of symptoms, not diagnosis alone. Preventive and Therapeutic Strategies. Early diagnosis and intervention. Regular follow-ups and long-term care. Family counselling and education. Lifestyle regulation and stress management. Integration with psychiatric care when required. A collaborative and ethical approach ensures patient safety and better outcomes.

Conclusion

Schizophrenia is a profound disorder of perception, thought, and self-experience. While modern psychiatry focuses on symptom control, homoeopathy offers a holistic approach aimed at restoring balance at the mental, emotional, and physical levels. Awareness, early recognition,

individualized treatment, and compassionate care are essential in improving the quality of life for individuals living with schizophrenia.

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