Facts and Figures

1. In the UK about 1 in 6 people will need treatment for mental ill health during their lifetime.¹

2. At some time during their life about 1 in 100 people will suffer an episode of schizophrenia.²

3. Schizophrenia occurs in all countries and societies of the world.

4. Schizophrenia affects men and women alike and sufferers come from all walks of life and social backgrounds.

5. Schizophrenia is a major illness. At any one time about 220,000 people are being treated for schizophrenia in the UK by the NHS.³

6. Schizophrenia is a killer. Sufferers have a 5 to 10% chance of dying by their own hand within ten years of diagnosis around two and half times higher than the general population.¹¹

7. Schizophrenia strikes most often in late teens and early twenties. Slightly later in women than in men. However late onset can occur as late as 70 years old.

8. Schizophrenia runs in families. If you have a parent or sibling with the illness you are more likely to suffer from it yourself.

9. Schizophrenia is not caused by poor parenting or over-concerned mothers: nor is it caused by adversity in childhood.

10. Episodes of schizophrenia are often triggered by environmental factors such as stress and by hormonal changes such as are associated with puberty, childbirth and the menopause.

11. There is now some evidence that using street drugs especially cannabis may increase your chances of suffering an episode of schizophrenia but the picture is still not clear.

12. About 25% of people who suffer an episode of schizophrenia will go on to recover completely without any further problems in the future.⁵

13. Modern medication is very effective and reduces the risk of relapse to about 10%.

14. There is no evidence that psychotherapy alone can treat schizophrenia effectively however it can be very useful in conjunction with medication.

15. About 25% of people with schizophrenia exhibit physical changes in their brains that can be seen on CT scans.

16. There are links between schizophrenia and certain physical illnesses. For instance coeliac disease and schizophrenia are often found in the same family and people with schizophrenia may be less vulnerable to certain physical conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.

17. The economic cost of schizophrenia is very great. The cost of treating a patient with schizophrenia through their life is about six times the cost of treating a patient with heart disease.

18. Schizophrenia accounts for around 30% of all spending on adult mental health in the NHS.³
19. Only around 13% of people living with schizophrenia in the UK are in any kind of work.⁶

20. Mental illness generally will cost the UK economy around £77 billion⁷ each year or around 4% of GDP.⁹

21. Because of the higher risk of suicide and greater vulnerability to physical conditions like diabetes people with schizophrenia will die on average 10 - 20 years earlier than the general population.⁸

22. In the UK mental illness represents around 10% of the total disease burden yet receives only 5.5% of the research funding.¹⁰ Mental illness as a whole receives less than 1% of the research funding that cancer does.

References

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7. Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2003, The Economic and Social Costs of Mental Illness,.


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