

**The Impact Of Mental Illness On Quality Life: A Special Study On Effects Of Schizophrenia On People And Its Rehabilitation Strategy**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Quality life is an outcome of many things which include satisfaction, happiness, growth, development, happiness and contentment. It refers to the social, financial, political and economic satisfaction of an individual. According to World Health Organization, quality of life is a perception that an individual has; it includes his cultural and moral judgments, his dreams and realities. It consists of his physical, mental and psychological health in addition to his interactions with the outside world. A person who is satisfied with his life is often said to be blessed with a quality life, but there are instances where a person with some mental disorders find it hard to achieve this state of quality life. These people often find it hard to find happiness and suffer a lot in their daily lives, as a result of their distorted thoughts and thinking, they miss out on a lot of opportunities and adventures, this paper tries to examine the impact of mental health disorders on the quality life of an individual and will also discuss on some coping mechanisms. This paper will deal with two of the most common and prevalent disorders viz bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. The paper is based on the secondary sources of data.*

Keywords: bipolar disorder; quality life; schizophrenia

**INTRODUCTION**

Quality of life (QOL) is a widely used term that individuals use in various spheres of life. It defines the benchmark that an individual sets for himself to live a happy and better life. Quality of life is a determinant of beliefs, values, morale, judgment and contentment. This is a subjective term and its value can be different for different people, they can attribute quality of life to various dimensions and attach various meanings to it. Generally, quality of life defines a state of mental and psychological wellbeing; it involves a state of freedom and ecstasy.

Quality of life is not dependent on income, it is more of a mental state and people with suitable income do not necessarily have a quality life. People with mental health issues like anxiety, bipolar and schizophrenia often have to miss out the quality life that they deserve. There are various domains that are important for living a quality life in patients that have some sort of mental health issues, these domains can be wellbeing, a sense of belongingness, self perception, autonomy, hope and physical activity. Mental illness is one of the most known reasons that hampers with the quality life and burdens people with the weight of its consequences. Mental health issues are one of the reasons that cause disabilities in the people and stop them from achieving their goals. Scientists are afraid that a time will come when mental health issues will lead to disrupted productivity and work havoc on the peace of nations. A person with mental illness will overlook his physical happiness and is only in need of a mental escape. His perception towards people, places and things change if he is not mentally well. It has been reported by scientists that people with mental diseases are more prone to heart diseases and can suffer from physical incidents also. What adds to the already existing inventory of worries is the stigma attached to it; in most cases people do not feel free to talk about their illnesses and can often land in gory situations. Their life suffers at the hands of stigma attached by society towards mental health issues. Mental health issues not only interfere with our personal life but professional life also. A person who is otherwise engaged and productive feels derailed and hopeless. When stress at work increases, their physical capacities also gets minimized and they feel an urge to live in isolation. In a fast growing world, mental health has taken a back seat and people find it hard to prioritize their personal and professional life. They do not find time to care for their mental health which has a pivotal place in our lives. It has been reported that about 20 percent of adults in working age group in United States suffer from some type of mental health issue. It interferes with their productivity and performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Holmberg and Kane (1999) examined the various effects of schizophrenia and reported that it is one of the most dreadful diseases as it can involve all the other functions of brain. It is difficult to diagnose a mental disease as most people do not pay much attention to it.

Thara (2005) reported that schizophrenia is one of the most chronic of all the mental health diseases. It comes with a lot of symptoms and affects the lives of patients to a great extent. It disrupts the normal functioning of the people and interferes with their social and personal interactions. Chaudhury (2006) in his study reported that mental health disabilities are one of the most important concerns that involve people from across the globe. These disabilities can be felt in various areas like educational efficacy, living tactics, training activities and daily life skills. He further reported that any illness that concerns the mind of a person and may disrupt with the normal functioning of the mind is mental illness. It can affect the way a person thinks and perceives things. Bowie (2010) concluded in his study that impairments in the neurology of brain is the major cause of schizophrenia.

### **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

1. To understand the effects of schizophrenia on quality life of patients
2. To give suggestions on improving the life of patients with mental health diseases.

### **SCHIZOPHRENIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON QUALITY LIFE OF PATIENTS**

Schizophrenia is a chronic mental disorder that affects people badly. People with schizophrenia often suffer from delusions, troubled thinking and hallucinations. These people are mostly delusional and have a lack of motivation. Most people correlate schizophrenia with split or multiple personality, these people also consider them as violent or having a criminal bent of mind, but in most of the cases these patients live with their families with minimal damage and repercussions. Schizophrenic people find it hard sometimes to distinguish between reality and imagination. They turn paranoid on small things and overthink a lot. They often have distorted beliefs and thought processes. Schizophrenic patients find it hard to concentrate and face memory and cognitive problems. Scientists are yet to discover the real cause of this disorder but most of them attribute it to genetic or stressful environmental conditions. A small portion of schizophrenics find it hard to fulfill their basic needs in life, they find it hard to dispense off their social duties as a spouse, friend or family. They develop a sense of alienation and are often unemployed. They find it hard to concentrate on one job and keep shifting their jobs according to their situations. The patients

with schizophrenia are at a bigger chance of getting divorced so mostly they do not marry. They are preoccupied with their thoughts as a result of which they do not make healthy conversations. They often indulge in self harm or substance abuse which further worsens their problems. The pattern of schizophrenia can differ in people, in some cases they may suffer one psychotic episode, others may suffer frequent psychotic episodes and others suffer rarely. Symptoms can vary, when it starts to develop, people and doctors may find it hard to diagnose, but some very common symptoms include having sleep distractions, having trouble at retaining and concentrating, getting peevish on small matters, suffering from hallucinations, paranoia and unorganized speech. The patients push their friends and family and live an isolated life. Patients of schizophrenia have to suffer in their private life also. They tend to show resentment and aggression towards their loved ones. Their anti social behavior makes them difficult to be loved. They find it hard to participate in daily chores. Most often, they hear voices in their head which can be either from one person or multiple speakers. They believe these voices to be real and converse with them. The conditions if gotten worse can make these victims harm themselves, it is very difficult to communicate with a person suffering from schizophrenia.

They may not respond for hours or even say a word. They find it hard to maintain their personal hygiene when conditions get worse. They may go on ranting at one time and being silent for hours together, they are mostly anti social or selectively social.

### **Rehabilitation strategies for victims of Schizophrenia**

Earlier scientists were looking on ways to completely mitigate this illness. These practices wanted to devise medicines that could completely cure the problem and not on temporary basis. It took a long time to realize that temporary wellbeing of a person is also crucial so that they do not indulge in extreme behaviors. This paved way for psychotherapy which consists of medication. These medicines help in reducing the effects of disease and countering lapses. Sometimes anti depressants are also given to the patients. Thirhalli (2010) suggested that antipsychotic medication can help in reducing the amount of disability in schizophrenia but it largely depends on the amount of family support a patient receives. With changing times, scientists came to know that medication only is not efficient to root out the disease; they need

to be rehabilitated and taken care of properly. This can be achieved by improving their functional mechanisms. Interactions with people who have same disease can be fruitful; establishing clubs where people interact about their illness can also prove to be fruitful. It should be noted that patients should take their medicines regularly which would otherwise ameliorate the existing problems. They should make timely visits to their doctors and ensure follow up. It should be noted that symptoms can vary from person to person. In some patients, conditions can be worse

While in others, it might not be that severe. Not all victims are dangerous, some can be trusted and do relatively well in their lives, but this will not nullify the fact that all victims have to suffer in one way or other. However with right medication and early detection, symptoms can be minimized by including strategies like psychotherapy, art therapy and medications. This is only possible when person is himself willing to bring a change in his lifestyle, when he is happy to go back to normalcy. The support from family and community also paves way for his speedy treatment. Spending quality time with family members has proven to be one of the most effective strategies to cure this disease. Rehabilitation centers are available in urban areas however rural areas should also develop this initiative to bring about a change in the mindset of people. Day to day normal functioning of body can also help people to fight this disease with minimum use of medication. Minimizing the symptoms of schizophrenia is one of the effective ways of treating this disease. This can be achieved by using medication and even talk therapy which is found to be fruitful in many cases. There are different types of psychotherapies depending on the patient requirements. One such therapy is individual therapy where one on one interaction with the therapist takes place and he teaches patient to deal with his thoughts and behaviors. The next therapy is known as CBT(Cognitive behavior therapy) where the therapist helps to bring a change in thinking patterns of patient. He helps patient to deal with paranoia and hallucinations. They identify the reasons that trigger mania among patients and try to avoid those incidents. The third type of therapy is cognitive remediation, which teaches people to recognize their cues and improve their attention, memory and thoughts. Some other methods can also be used like

**Social skills training:** can focus on improving communication and social interactions between people to involve them into discussions.

**Rehabilitation:** This may include counseling, motivation, support and financial advices.

**Family support:** peers, siblings, parents can play a titanic role by providing an atmosphere where an individual feels happy and loved.

**Social recovery therapy (SRT):** can help to boost up social skills among adults who have signs of schizophrenia. It helps to prevent the early signs of schizophrenia that can further aggravate the situation if left untreated.

**Social recovery interventions:** which includes adjusting to work environments, practice sessions, being in competitive environment and avoiding conflicts. It involves techniques like communication, brainstorming, problem solving and expressing emotions.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded from the above study that schizophrenia is undoubtedly one of the chronic mental diseases that can interfere with the healthy functioning of an individual. It can rob the peace and sanctity of an individual and leave him hopeless and lifeless. It can mar the personal and professional life of an individual if left untreated. What needs to be done is to bring about a change in the mindset of people where they do not attach stigma with the illness and help people to get timely treatment and adequate help. In addition to it, patients should believe in themselves and take proper medication with therapies to come back to normalcy and fight with this disease.

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