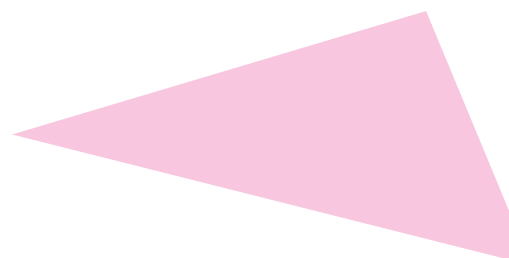




Therapy Guide

# Schizophrenia

GKA.



## The GKA Difference

GKA has been working in schizophrenia for 10 years and, in that time, has worked on numerous projects for its clients, ensuring that they access recognised psychiatrists active in the therapy area. As a result of this long-standing experience, the team at GKA has developed a deep understanding of this challenging condition and built strong relationships within the schizophrenia community. This Guide presents a short overview of the condition and shows why GKA can make a difference to your project.



# The Lowdown

Schizophrenia is a long-term mental health condition with a range of psychological symptoms, from hallucinations to delusions, which can lead to muddled thoughts<sup>1</sup>. These symptoms can result in changes in behaviour. Schizophrenia is seen as a psychotic illness as a sufferer may sometimes be unable to distinguish between their own thoughts and reality. It is the most common form of psychosis<sup>2</sup>.

## Some facts about Schizophrenia



1 in 100  
people will experience  
schizophrenia in their lifetime



1836  
the year the condition was first  
described



15-35 years  
are the ages most affected



24 million  
people affected globally

First described by German psychiatrist, Dr Emil Kraepelin in 1896, for many years it was thought schizophrenia was hereditary and schizophrenics were admitted to large asylums where they remained for much of their lives. However, after World War II, scientists began to investigate whether schizophrenia was a reaction to pathological relationships or patterns of communication within a patient's family.

# Understanding Schizophrenia

Clinicians differentiate between two groups of symptoms: positive and negative<sup>3</sup>. Positive symptoms include hallucinations and delusions whereas negative symptoms include physical tiredness and a lack of motivation. While positive symptoms tend to be more dramatic and, at first, the most distressing, negative symptoms usually cause more problems, as they can last longer.

## Causes of Schizophrenia



While the exact cause of schizophrenia is unknown, experts believe the condition is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. No gene has yet been identified for schizophrenia but family history of the condition increases the risk of being affected along the following lines<sup>4</sup>:

- 10% risk if one parent affected
- 40% risk if both parents affected
- 3% risk if one grandparent affected

Predisposing factors for schizophrenia include complications during pregnancy or childbirth and difficulties in childhood development. It is also thought that stressful life events and drug use can trigger the condition. Suicide and self harm rates among people with schizophrenia tend to be high.

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## Incidence



Schizophrenia affects about 7 per thousand of the adult population, mostly in the 15-35 age group<sup>5</sup>, and affects 24 million people worldwide. Typically diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 35, the condition affects men and women equally. It is estimated that 1 in 100 people will experience schizophrenia in their lifetime<sup>6</sup>. Around 25% of those diagnosed only have one episode of illness and make a good recovery with no further problems. Another 25% progress to a chronic, long-term state with no periods of remission. The remaining 50% suffer periods of remission and relapse on a long-term basis.

The World Health Organisation estimates that 90% of those with untreated schizophrenia are in developing countries and half of all people with schizophrenia do not receive appropriate care.



## Treatments



The mainstays of treatment are atypical antipsychotic drugs, such as olanzapine, quetiapine and risperidone, which are used to improve symptoms and prevent relapse<sup>7</sup>. Antipsychotics can be given as long-acting, depot injections, helping boost compliance/patient adherence. While these drugs are associated with fewer side effects, older treatments, including chlorpromazine, haloperidol, trifluoperazine, are still used.

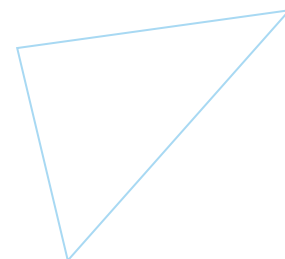
While more research is needed, it appears that talking therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can reduce the incidence of relapse. Research also shows that interventions with sufferers' families can impact relapse rates.

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### References

- 1: NHS Choices
- 2: Patient.co.uk
- 3 & 6: Mental Health Foundation
- 4 & 7: Netdoctor
- 5: WHO

## GKA Experience



As a fieldwork agency embedded in the medical world, GKA is no stranger to the challenges of the schizophrenia market. Since 2004, it has been carrying out projects in the arena for a host of clients. As a result, GKA has a strong group of psychiatrists on its respondent panel who regularly take part in research studies and contribute to its Finders Network for patient studies.

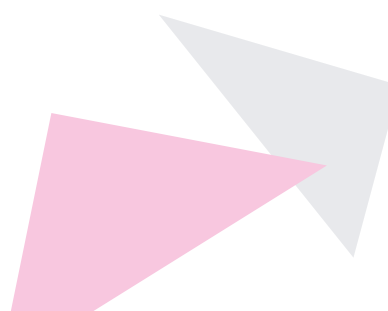
Their involvement in the Network is particularly important in schizophrenia as patient recruitment is very challenging, for obvious reasons. However, having this strong group of psychiatrists within its Finders Network ensures the GKA team can find the correct patients to meet a client's needs.

At the same time, GKA will always endeavour to work with the most relevant patient groups who can also help with the recruitment of patients. In recognition of any support, the agency will give a donation while working towards building an ongoing relationship.

During the years it has been running research projects in schizophrenia, GKA has worked with every type of healthcare

professional, carer and patient. As well as working with NICE advisers, GPs, pharmacists, care commissioners, GKA has a strong panel of respondents including psychiatrists and psychiatrist nurses.

GKA's experience in running projects in schizophrenia is second to none. It has met and overcome significant challenges faced by market researchers, not least the difficulties of moving past the stigma associated with the condition. The agency works with interviewers who are experts in handling sensitive subjects and accustomed to ensuring participants' needs are met and their concerns addressed.





We are GKA.

If you have been asked to carry out a healthcare market research study surrounding Schizophrenia or one of the related conditions, why not give us a call today?

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