

Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders

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1. Overview

- Psychotic disorders involve a loss of contact with reality, most notably schizophrenia, which affects thought, perception, and behavior.

2. Positive Symptoms

- Hallucinations (perceiving things that aren't there), delusions (fixed false beliefs), and disorganized speech.

3. Negative Symptoms

- Flat affect, social withdrawal, reduced motivation, and poverty of speech.

4. Cognitive Symptoms

- Difficulty with attention, memory, and executive functioning.

5. Causes

- Genetic vulnerability combined with environmental triggers (the diathesis-stress model); dopamine dysregulation plays a key role.

6. Course of the Disorder

- Typically emerges in late adolescence/early adulthood; often chronic with periods of relapse and remission.

7. Treatment

- Antipsychotic medication is central, supported by psychosocial rehabilitation, family therapy, and social skills training.