

Epidemiology of Schizophrenia—Study in Two Urban Hospital

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Summary :

The study was conducted to assess the Sociodemographic Characteristics, family history of mental illness and premorbid personality pattern of the schizophrenic patients. Of the patients 62.12% were males, 77.26% were within 14-30 years of age and 64.39% came from the Urban areas. About 54.54% were unmarried and 79.55% were literate from primary to graduate level. Unemployment was the highest occupation group with 23.48% of the cases. Majority of the patients were either middle or lower economic group with 55.30% and 39.39% respectively. Of the patients 60.60% gave no history of mental illness in the family and 18.18% gave history of psychotic disorders among their first degree relatives. Normal premorbid personality was found in 55.57% of the patients. Among the abnormal personalities, schizoid and passive type was dominant with 31.81% and 8.3% respectively. This Study will help to generate hypothesis about the causation of this major psychiatric disorder.

Introduction :

Schizophrenia is a major psychiatric disorder in which there is disturbance of thinking, perception, Volition, after and deterioration of personality. In the acute condition, there may be a disturbance in the associations between thought, so that speech becomes illogical or overinclusive and auditory hallucinations and delusional beliefs are common. Affect may become flat, blunted or incongruent and some patients may develop psychomotor abnormalities such as bizarre mannerisms or stereotyped movements or utterances. In the chronic cases there is reduction in drive and volition occur and the patient becomes withdrawn and apathetic with a decline in social and occupational functioning.

In a rural community survey of Bangladesh, the prevalence rate of schizophrenia was found

2:54/1000 of the population¹ The life time expectancy of the disease is 1% of the general population^{2,3,4}. The present study was designed to assess the sociodemographic characteristics, family history of mental illness and personality pattern of the schizophrenic patients.

Materials and Methods :

The study was carried out in the psychiatric out patient department of Mitford Hospital, Dhaka from February'92 to January'93 and a total of 132 schizophrenic patients were collected for the study. A multipoint questionnaire which included sociodemographic parameters, family history of mental illness and premorbid personality of the schizophrenic patients was collected by interviewing the patients and their relatives by the authors. The diagnosis was made on the basis of ICD-10.⁵ Normal premorbid personality was characterised by an absence of psychiatric symptoms and normal socialisation patterns. Schizoid premorbid personality was characterised by emotional coldness, shy, apparent indifference to either praise or criticism, little interest in having sexual experience with another person, almost invariable preference for solitary activities, excessive preoccupation with fantasy an introspection, lack of close friends or confiding relationships and marked insensitivity to prevailing social norms and conventions.

The data was processed and analysed statistically.

Results :

Table-I shows of the patients, 62.12% were males and 37.87% females. The mean age of the patients was 26.1 years (SD=7.76) and the range was 14-50 years. Majority of the patients 64.39% came from the urban background and 35.60% from the rural background. Among the patients 23.48%,

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54.54% and 79.55% was unemployed, unmarried and literate respectively. Majority of the patients were either middle or lower economic group with 55%3% and 39.39% respectively.

Table-II shows family history of mental illness was absent in 60.60% of the patients and 18.18% and 25% of the patients gave the family history of psychotic disorders in their first and second degree

Table -I*Sociodemographic characteristics of the patients*

Characteristics	Male (N-82)	Female (N-50)	Total	
			(N-132)	0%
Age :				
up to 20	14	15	29	21.96
21 - 30	52	21	73	55.30
31 - 40	15	8	23	17.42
41 - 50	1	6	7	5.30
Mean age:26.1 Yrs (SD=7.76). Range: 14-50 yrs				
Habitus :				
Urban	51	34	85	64.39
Rural	31	16	47	35.60
Marital status :				
Unmarried	52	20	72	54.54
Married	27	22	49	37.12
Divorced	2	2	4	3.00
Widow	1	4	5	3.78
Separated	0	2	2	1.51
Occupation :				
Student	14	10	24	18.18
Housewife	0	24	24	18.18
Service	12	5	17	12.87
Business	15	0	15	11.36
Labour	6	0	7	4.54
Cultivation	7	0	7	5.30
Household work	0	6	6	4.54
Self employed	2	0	2	1.51
Unemployed	26	5	31	23.48
Education :				
Illiterate	15	12	27	20.45
Primary	17	13	30	22.72
Secondary	22	10	32	24.24
S.S.C	8	6	14	10.60
H.S.C	8	5	13	9.84
Graduate	12	4	16	12.12
Economic condition :				
Upper	3	4	7	5.30
Middle	47	26	73	55.30
Lower	32	20	52	39.39

Table—II*Family history of mental illness*

	Male		Female		Total		X ²
	N=82	%	N=50	%	N=132	%	Significance
Absent	50	60.67	30	60	80	60.60	--
Present							
First degree relatives	13	15.85	11	22	24	18.18	NS
Second degree relatives	23	28.04	10	20	33	25.00	p <0.05

Table—III*Premorbid personality pattern*

	Male		Female		Total		X ²
	N=82	%	N=50	%	N=132	%	Significance
Normal	46	56.09	30	60	76	57.57	---
Schizoid	28	34.14	14	28	42	31.81	p < 0.05
Passive	6	7.31	5	10	11	8.33	NS
Anankastic	0	0.00	1	2	1	0.75	NS
Hyperthymic	2	4.3	0	0	2	1.51	NS

relatives respectively. In the first degree relatives history of psychotic disorder, 10.60% and 7.58% was found in the parents and siblings of the patients respectively.

Table-III shows normal premorbid personality was found in 57.57% of the patients and 31.81% and 8.33% was schizoid and passive type premorbid personality respectively.

Discussion :

The study was done on the basis of information obtained from the patients and their relatives attended the psychiatric outpatient department of Mitford Hospital, Dhaka. Among the patients 62.12% was males and 37.81% females. From other studies it was found that there is no difference in the prevalence of schizophrenia between males and females and it is equally common in both sexes^{6,7}. But in our study

male schizophrenic patients outnumber females. Poor economic condition of the family might be responsible regarding this variation because in our society income of the family mainly depends on the male members of the family. The other reason of this variation probably unusual behaviour may be tolerated less in males than females. One study reported that males are likely to come to psychiatrist sooner because unusual behaviour may be tolerated less in males than females⁸. The majority of the patients, 77.26% within 14 to 30 years of age and the mean age was 26.1 and the range was 14 to 50 years. our findings was similar with other findings where they reported that the schizophrenic patients were significantly younger at onset and peak incidence occurs at 25 to 30 years of age^{2,9}. It was also found from other studies that the peak age of onset for men in between 15 and 25 years and for women between

25 and 35 years and approximately 90% of patients in treatment for schizophrenia are between 15 and 54 years of age and the age of onset of the disease is usually between 15 and 45 years^{6,7}. Another study reported that schizophrenia has a peak onset in the 3rd decade in males and 4th decade in females and a median onset of 28.3 years in males and 33.3 years in females⁸.

The majority of the patients 64.39% came from the urban background. Our finding was consistent with other findings where they reported that a high concentration of schizophrenic patients has repeatedly been found in the inner areas of large towns^{2,3,8}.

In our study 54.54% of the patients were unmarried. Among the unmarried 63.41% was males and 40% females. These findings are consistent with other findings where they reported significantly fewer of the schizophrenic 26.7% had been married and single persons were over represented, accounting for 66% of schizophrenic men and 31% of women. Single men comprised 32.5% of total schizophrenic sample and single women comprised 15.8%^{7,9,10}.

In our study 23.48% of the patients were unemployed. The reasons for unemployment in schizophrenic patients might be due to early age of onset of the illness, effects of the illness on the patients and social stigmas about the illness. In our country literacy rate is low but in our study majority of the patients were literate 79.55%. This variation might be due to localisation of our hospitals in the urban areas.

Majority of our patients 55.30% and 39.39% came from the middle and lower economic background respectively. Our findings were consistent with other findings where they reported schizophrenia is more common in the lower socioeconomic groups, whether this measured by occupational or educational criteria. Poor housing, financial difficulties and unemployment could act as stressors in susceptible individuals to precipitate the disorders^{2,3,8}.

In present study 18.18% and 25% of the patients gave the history of psychotic disorders in their first and second degree relatives respectively and history of psychotic disorders were found more in the second degree relatives of the male patients. This is probably due to greater number of male schizophrenic patients in our sample. Family studies suggest rate of schizophrenia was higher among the siblings of probands than in the general population and increased

rates not only among the probands siblings but also among their relatives³. Children both of whose parents have had schizophrenia have at least a 36% chance of developing the condition but where only one parent was affected the average risk is 12%. The risk for second degree relatives varies around 2.5%⁴.

The schizoid type of premorbid personality was found 31.81% in our study which was consistent with another report where 35% of schizophrenic patients were previously shy, withdrawn and had socially isolated personalities². The schizoid type of premorbid personality was found higher in males than females with 34.14% and 28% respectively. This finding was also similar with another finding where they reported that premorbid social competence is lower in males than in females schizophrenics⁸.

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