

facts Psychosis

What is Psychosis?

There is a group of illnesses which disrupt the functioning of the brain so much, they cause a condition called psychosis.

When someone experiences psychosis they are unable to distinguish what is real from what is not real - there is a loss of contact with reality.

Most people recover well from an episode of psychosis.

What are the symptoms?

Among symptoms doctors look for are:

● **Confused thinking**

People may make unusual or illogical associations in their thinking. The everyday thoughts that let us live our daily lives become confused and disjointed.

● **Delusions**

A delusion is a false belief held by a person which is not held by others around them. For example, the person may think someone is trying to harm them when this is not true.

● **Hallucinations**

The person may see, hear, feel, smell or taste something that is not actually there. The most common type of hallucination is hearing voices which no one else can hear.

What causes Psychosis?

The causes of psychosis are complex and not fully understood. It is likely there is a combination of factors. It is probable that some people are born with a predisposition to develop this kind of illness, and that certain things - for example, stress or use of drugs such as marijuana, LSD or speed - can trigger their first episode.

Some people experience a brief form of psychosis which lasts only a few days or weeks. Some people experience only a few episodes of psychosis in their lifetime. Some people experience psychosis associated with a longer-term illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

How many people develop Psychosis?

About one in 30 people will experience psychosis at some time in their lives. Most of these will be first affected in their late teens or early twenties.

How is Psychosis treated?

Treatment can do much to reduce and even eliminate the symptoms.

Treatment should generally include a combination of medication, psychosocial and community support. All are usually essential to gain the best outcome for each person.

● **Medication**

Certain medications assist the brain to restore its usual chemical balance which then helps reduce or get rid of some of the symptoms.

● **Community and psychosocial support programs**

This support should include information; accommodation; help with finding suitable work, training and education; psychosocial rehabilitation and mutual support groups. Understanding and acceptance by the community is also very important.

How do I find out More?

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of North Queensland produces a range of other fact sheets and information packages. The Fellowship also offers face to face and telephone support.

To find out more, call the Fellowship on (07) 47 253 664.