

RELAPSE OR REINTEGRATION: A
TEN-YEAR OUTCOME STUDY OF
SCHIZOPHRENIA IN JAMAICA

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation evaluates the clinical outcome of a cohort of persons diagnosed with schizophrenia ten years from initial contact with the mental health care system in Jamaica. A follow-up of three hundred and seventeen patients (317) patients identified in 1992 with a CATEGO± diagnosis of Schizophrenia was conducted. The Positive and Negative syndrome Scale and the Present Status Examination were used to rate the current presence and severity of psychotic symptoms in those patients available for interview. The main outcome measures collected from case notes and patient interviews included, clinical status, contact with clinical service, employment status, outpatient clinic compliance, and relapse rate. The results include the data from the interviews conducted with 212 patients and 73 patients case notes and medical records of those who were unavailable for interview. Thirty three patients (10.41%) were lost to follow-up. This included 14 patients who had died, and 11 patients who had migrated. The cohort consisted of (64.2%) males and (31.8%) females. The relapse rate was 41.5%. One hundred and twenty five persons (43%) were employed, while 69 (24.2%) were unemployed. The PANSS showed 15% patients who had relapsed were exhibiting evidence of continuing psychosis. Drug use and abuse in the cohort showed that of those patients using drugs (N= 183), 69 (37.7%) used Cannabis and (11.6%) of these patients reported addiction to Cannabis. The conclusions of this dissertation demonstrate that the relapse rate of schizophrenia in Jamaica ten years after diagnosis (41.5%) is significantly higher than the relapse rate found for the same cohort in 1992 (13%). The rate is in keeping with the worldwide relapse rate of 40% ten years after first-contact. The relapse rate found in this study suggests that Afro-Caribbean people do not have an adverse prognosis of schizophrenia in their own environment.

Keywords: Relapse rate, Follow-up, Clinical outcome, Proportion of good outcome.