Schizophrenia and Family Therapy

Schizophrenia is one of the disorders that have mixed nature with the variety of different causes that may be combined in one patient. At the same time, health care providers should be very attentive to symptoms of other disorders and psychotic conditions that may be displayed by a patient. The importance of combining more than one approach in treatment of schizophrenia and related conditions should be considered through review of literature available on this topic. In this respect, patients would benefit from a combination of approaches opposed to those being treated with the help of a single approach.

Many prominent researchers have analyzed therapies of different kinds, including different psychological therapies. As stated in the study by Pilling et al. schizophrenia may be treated using therapies of different types, focusing on improvement of research methods, including “standard care and other active interventions” (763). The variety of treatment approaches suggest that a combination of psychological, biological, physical, and other approaches may contribute positively opposed to application of a single approach. For instance, using family therapy may be ineffective when treating a person who has a “high prevalence of co-occurring substance use disorders, which is related to a worse course of psychiatric illness, more frequent relapses, and increased depression and suicide, compared with those with schizophrenia alone” (Gottlieb, Mueser, and Glynn 490). At the same time, a combination of more than one therapy requires special attention to be paid to the response of the patient to treatment.

Family therapy is one of therapies that prove to be effective in the treatment of schizophrenia. According to the findings by Pilling et al., “Family therapy, in particular
single family therapy, had clear preventative effects on the outcomes of psychotic relapse and readmission" (763), which proves that a combination of more than one approach is more effective than any of the approaches used independently. Effectiveness of treatment methods may be compared in patients that display a variety of other psychotic disorders in addition to schizophrenia. At the same time, the difference in effectiveness of treatment may be predetermined by the initial cause of the disorder, as schizophrenia may be caused by one of more factors, including genetics and predisposition to this psychological disorder, such factor as substance abuse and trauma, or the environment. Correspondingly, all factors may be combined in one patient, making it very important to combine different types of treatment.

Other reviews on schizophrenia and its treatment show that researchers are interested in the effectiveness of various approaches. For instance, Pharoah, Mari, Rathbone, and Wong compared a variety of family based interventions with standards care and obtained different results, but the main finding was that family support decreases frequency of relapse. The initial hypothesis of the research by Pharoah, Mari, Rathbone, and Wong stated that “People with schizophrenia from families that express high levels of criticism, hostility, or over involvement, have more frequent relapses than people with similar problems from families that tend to be less expressive of emotions” (1). The importance of family support has been emphasized in a variety of different studies based on observations and randomized trials. Findings received in the studies by Leff, Berkowitz, Shavit, Strachan, Glass, and Vaughn (1989) and Leff, Berkowitz, Shavit, Strachan, Glass, and Vaughn (1990) proved that family involvement and family
therapy sessions reduce the frequency of relapses and help the overall effectiveness of treatment for patients with schizophrenia.

Families of patients with schizophrenia can be either supportive or hostile toward their members that have such psychological and psychiatric disorders. In the context of the importance of family support to such patients, the relations with the family members are of special concerns. As such, Yu, Yang, Lu, and Ma suggested reality therapy for coping with the problems apparent in the family due to psychological and psychiatric problems of one of the members. Frequency of relapses may be reduced with the help of family support, while family support may be gained through application of other therapy approaches and outlining the direction in which a patient wants to forward the relations with the family. In other words, a counselor or health care provider should be interested in the relations of patients with other family members, because they may facilitate intervention and boost their effectiveness.

Another important aspect of treating patients with schizophrenia includes cultural diversity in contemporary global society. As such, some researchers address this issue with regard to the variety of therapy approaches and the need to include a culture-oriented factor while choosing the appropriate approach. “Family therapists are increasingly recognizing the need for the study and implementation of evidence based culture-relevant and culture-responsive therapeutic techniques” (Asmal et al 367). To conclude, the number of approaches and interventions available for treating schizophrenia is great for current situation with the lack of support provided family members. In this respect, families should be involved actively into therapy sessions to contribute positively to effectiveness of those treatment interventions.
Works Cited


