

REDEFINING OUTCOME MEASURES IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: INTEGRATING SOCIAL & CLINICAL PARAMETERS

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Schizophrenia is a complex neurobehavioral disorder for which there are many promising new treatments. There is, however, a discrepancy in outcome measure reports when obtained from patients, relatives, caregivers, or professionals making it difficult to determine the level of recovery in patients. The reason for the lack of agreement may be due to the limitations of the measurement tools themselves, which are not comprehensive and may measure different aspects of outcome. Alternatively, it could be that the conceptual understanding of outcome and in turn recovery requires development. Unfortunately for one of the above reasons or both, patients assessed as “recovered” remain excluded from mainstream society. We are of the opinion that this is the case because present outcome measures do not capture real-life situations. We propose that the concept of recovery should be carefully defined and that the gold standard of outcome should incorporate social and clinical parameters. We define recovery and discuss remission in full within the body of the paper. In short we propose that within the definition of recovery, personal growth, supportive relationships, and social inclusion should be incorporated. With the new definition the following will be addressed when assessing outcome:

- 1) Symptom manifestation,
- 2) Response to treatment,
- 3) Impact on self & others.

We also hope that with a new definition the following three dimensions will be addressable:

- 1) Clinical remission,
- 2) Presence of side effects,
- 3) social outcome.

Finally, the reassessment of recovery should be sensitive to culture, be comprehensive, and reliable.