

# Priority Topic: SCHIZOPHRENIA

## Key Features:

1. In adolescents and young adults presenting with problem behaviours:

- a) Consider schizophrenia in the differential diagnosis.
- b) Reassess the diagnosis as the situation evolves.

***What you should study:*** see also Priority Topic Behavioural Problems

✓ Recognition and DDX of Psychosis AAFP 2015

2. In apparently stable patients with schizophrenia (e.g. those who are not floridly psychotic), assess periodically in a structured fashion (ideally seeking collateral information from family members and other caregivers):

- Positive and negative symptoms
- Performance of activities of daily living and their level of social functioning
- Ideation of harm to themselves or others, including the risk for violence
- Medication compliance and side effects
- Substance use

- Capacity to accept or refuse treatment

**What you should study:** see also Priority Topics **Mental Competency, Depression and Suicide**

**Be sure to assess:** symptoms, function, medication, risk of danger (suicide, homicide, violence), substance use, collateral information, competency.

3. When caring for patients with **psychosis**, clearly communicate limits of confidentiality to the patient and the family .

**What you should study:**

- ✓ **Chapter 3 :** Practical Guide to Mental Health Rights MSSS Quebec 2009
- ✓ **Chapitre 3 :** Guide pratique sur les droits en santé mentale MSSS Québec 2009

4. In **all patients** presenting with **psychotic symptoms**, inquire about substance use and abuse.

**What you should study:**

- ✓ Recognition and DDX of Psychosis AAFP 2015
- ✓ Schizophrenia and Substance Use
- ✓ Primary Care Approach to Substance Misuse AAFP 2013

**NB: this article uses DSM-IV definitions**

5. In patients with schizophrenia, ensure early treatment and follow-up , including referral and collaborative care , because this may improve prognosis .

6. In decompensating patients with schizophrenia, determine if substance use is a contributor , whether there are medication compliance and side-effect problems , and if psychosocial supports have changed .

7. In a decompensating patient with schizophrenia,

- a) Determine whether they meet the criteria for involuntary treatment.
- b) Help the patient understand why this is necessary.
- c) Clarify your continuing role in care.

### ***What you should study:***

- ✓ When a person presents a danger to him or herself or others Douglas
- ✓ **Chapter 2 : Practical Guide to Mental Health Rights MSSS Quebec 2009**
- ✓ **Chapitre 2 : Guide pratique sur les droits en santé mentale MSSS Québec 2009**

8. Diagnose and manage serious complications/side effects of antipsychotic medications (e.g. neuroleptic malignant syndrome, tardive dyskinesia, cardiometabolic risks).

### **What you should study:**

- ✓ Adverse Effects of Antipsychotic Medications AAFP 2010
- ✓ Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome Am J Psychiatry 2007
- ✓ Les antipsychotiques atypiques a toutes les sauces MduQ 2012
- ✓ Les nouveaux antipsychotiques Prise 2 MduQ 2014
- ✓ La dyskinesie tardive – toujours d' actualite MduQ 2012

9. Include psychosocial supports (e.g. social determinants of health, family support, disability issues, vocational rehabilitation) as part of the treatment plan for patients with schizophrenia

**We also have the full Diagnostic Criteria from the DSM-5 for you:  
(also available via McGill Library – search DSM-5)**

- ✓ Brief Psychotic Disorder
- ✓ Delusional Disorder
- ✓ Psychotic Disorder due to Medical Condition
- ✓ Schizoaffective Disorder
- ✓ Schizophreniform Disorder
- ✓ Schizophrenia
- ✓ Substance-induced Psychotic Disorder