



Schizophrenia International Research Society

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Statement on the Importance of Research

By: Philip Harvey, Ph.D.

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The mission of the Schizophrenia International Research Society (SIRS) is to promote research aimed at identification of the causes of schizophrenia, prevention of the illness whenever possible, and treatment of those people who develop the illness. This includes supporting the highest quality research and advocating for increased research funding and increased opportunities (and reduced barriers) for later research. We are a multidisciplinary society, including researchers who identify themselves as psychologists, psychiatrists, neuroscientists, and neurologists. We have biennial meetings and have two high profile journals.

Schizophrenia is a devastating illness with an early onset and substantial disability from its outset. Schizophrenia shortens the lifespan of people affected by the illness by at least 20 years. The cause of schizophrenia is not known and current treatments for the illness do not reduce disability. Thus, research on the causes of schizophrenia, including factors such as genetics and environmental experiences, is critically important. Similarly, research on treatments that reduce disability is also critical. While current treatments aimed at the psychotic symptoms are as effective as treatments in other areas of medicine (such as hypertension), they also produce side effects that may be directly associated with reduced life expectancy. Research on schizophrenia is focused on all of these topics and we support them all equally.

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