

Understanding and Treating Cognition in Schizophrenia

A Clinician's Handbook

Philip D Harvey • Tonmoy Sharma

In the past 10 years especially there has been an explosion of interest in and research on cognition in schizophrenia, although most of the critical aspects of cognitive functioning in schizophrenia were identified some time previous, in the first half of the twentieth century.

In *Understanding and Treating Cognition in Schizophrenia: A Clinician's Handbook*, it is the authors' perspective that cognition is one of the most important aspects of schizophrenic illness and as the book demonstrates, impairments in these cognitive processes are probably the underlying cause of much of the well-known disability and dependency seen in patients with schizophrenia. This book provides easy-to-follow, but sophisticated analyses of cognitive deficit, their implications and newly developing strategies.

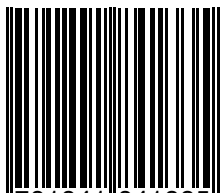
Topics covered include on-going questions about whether deficits reflect a central feature of the illness or whether they are a consequence of other aspects of the illness. The pros and cons of use of conventional versus novel antipsychotics are discussed - novel antipsychotics show great preliminary promise and this is one of the most exciting and current domains of research on cognition in schizophrenia. Another potential way forward in treating this aspect of schizophrenia is the clinical use of functional imaging with schizophrenia which still remains a long way off, but its benefits have led to exciting information about the illness and may ultimately prove a useful tool for determining treatment choices.

There remain many controversies in the treatment of cognition in schizophrenia and several of these are discussed: whether patients with schizophrenia have a global intellectual deficit or whether specific deficits are present and distinguishable from a backdrop of overall poor performance; whether certain cognitive deficits are characteristic of all patients with schizophrenia; the approach that should be employed in assessment.

CONTENTS

The history of cognition and schizophrenia • Cognitive deficits as a core feature of schizophrenia • Learning and memory in schizophrenia • Working memory in schizophrenia • Executive functioning in schizophrenia • Attention deficits in schizophrenia • Functional deficits and cognition • The cost of cognitive impairment in schizophrenia • Cognitive and functional changes with aging • The neuroimaging correlates of cognitive deficits • Conventional antipsychotic medications and cognition in schizophrenia • Novel antipsychotics as cognitive enhancers • Alternative pharmacological cognitive enhancers • Behavioural cognitive enhancement • Functional neuroimaging of effects of antipsychotics in schizophrenia

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