

Fact Sheet On Clinical Management Of Schizophrenia In Adult Persons With Mental Retardation And Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD)

1. Schizophrenia is more common in persons with mental retardation than in the general population.
2. Treatment of schizophrenia requires a careful diagnostic evaluation and identification of target symptoms.
3. Antipsychotic medications are the major treatment for schizophrenia.
 4. New, second or third generation antipsychotic medications are optimal choices for schizophrenia in persons with MR/DD.
 5. Medication dosages for schizophrenia are adjusted according to the patient's body size, intellectual disability and associated health or neurological problems.
6. The goal of treatment is control of symptoms and improvement of quality of life.
 7. Negative symptoms may improve in persons with mild mental retardation; however, positive symptoms are the primary target in persons with moderate to severe mental retardation.
8. Antipsychotic therapy requires a minimum of six weeks to determine efficacy at adequate doses of medication.
9. Polypharmacy with the prescription of more than one antipsychotic medication of the same type is rarely helpful.
10. Treatment of schizophrenia with antipsychotic medications requires understanding of the common side effects produced by this class of drugs.
11. Clinicians should document in the medical record, discussions with the family of patients about possible medication side effects.
12. Therapy focuses on improvement of target symptoms rather than total eradication of symptoms.