Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists clinical practice guidelines for the management of schizophrenia and related disorders

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Abstract

Objectives: This guideline provides recommendations for the clinical management of schizophrenia and related disorders for health professionals working in Australia and New Zealand. It aims to encourage all clinicians to adopt best practice principles. The recommendations represent the consensus of a group of Australian and New Zealand experts in the management of schizophrenia and related disorders. This guideline includes the management of ultra-high risk syndromes, first-episode psychoses and prolonged psychoses, including psychoses associated with substance use. It takes a holistic approach, addressing all aspects of the care of people with schizophrenia and related disorders, not only correct diagnosis and symptom relief but also optimal recovery of social function.

Methods: The writing group planned the scope and individual members drafted sections according to their area of interest and expertise, with reference to existing systematic reviews and informal literature reviews undertaken for this guideline. In addition, experts in specific areas contributed to the relevant sections. All members of the writing group reviewed the entire document. The writing group also considered relevant international clinical practice guidelines. Evidence-based recommendations were formulated when the writing group judged that there was sufficient evidence on a topic. Where evidence was weak or lacking, consensus-based recommendations were formulated. Consensus-based recommendations are based on the consensus of a group of experts in the field and are informed by their agreement as a group, according to their collective clinical and research knowledge and experience. Key considerations were selected and reviewed by the writing group. To encourage wide community participation, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists invited review by its committees and members, an expert advisory committee and key stakeholders including professional bodies and special interest groups.

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