



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

# Role of Family Dynamics in Mental Wellbeing

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## BACKGROUND:

Family is a composite of individual members in amicable connections that frame a group of related implications and qualities. Family stability and harmonious relationship plays an integral role in the physical, social and particularly, mental wellbeing of each individual (6). However, with time, the socio cultural influences have modified the framework of family in the east as well as in the west which has led to serious disruption in family dynamics. Such disruption impacts emotional resilience of the members and may lead to mental illnesses like depression, schizophrenia. (1)

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## DISCUSSION:

Schizophrenia is an extreme mental turmoil which usually begins in late adolescence or early adulthood and affects around 21 million people globally (5). The significance of family support in mental wellbeing is evident through bio-psycho-social model of mental health. The biological model spotlights that the risk of schizophrenia to first degree relatives is roughly multiple times more than the risk of schizophrenia to distant degree relatives (4). Besides biological factors, the social decorum is also vital to individual's mental health. If a child's constant environment is deprived of mentally fit parents, then deterioration of his social, cognitive, and behavioral domains become obvious (2). Correspondingly, the patient's mother had schizophrenia, so the constant paranoid behavior may have led her daughter to develop such thoughts. Also, her mother was socially isolated due to her aggressive nature and so her daughter also mirrored those characteristics. Research suggests that both pharmacological and psychosocial interventions aid in managing schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders. Psychosocial intervention for the treatment of schizophrenia includes cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psycho education, family intervention and assertive community treatment (3).

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## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION:

Early identification and referral services for therapeutic help can reduce the severity of mental illness. Likewise, early identification of mother could have reduced likelihood of affecting her daughter. Moreover, psycho education in community can create understanding of mental illness and its treatment among individuals (3). In this regard, community health nurses as well as organizations working for mental health can play a role. Besides family, social support from community members can also help in promoting mental wellbeing of individuals. In conclusion, family support acts as a backbone in developing resilience among members.

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## CASE REPORT:

During clinical rotation in the psychiatry ward, there was a 22 year old female who was diagnosed with schizophrenia on the grounds of paranoid and somatic delusional complaints. Her father had passed away when she was 5 years of age. From that point forward, she lived with her mother. Additionally, her mother also had psychosis since 2 years, yet she did not endeavor to look for therapeutic help. The patient and her mother had no contacts with either paternal or maternal relatives. The issue emerged when patient's mother suddenly vanished from the hospital abandoning her daughter in the ward and was not able to be followed back.



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