

Schizophrenia: Can Cognitive Function be Enhanced?

NIMH looks at the effects of medications on the way the brain works

People with schizophrenia often have problems concentrating and remembering. Sometimes they find it hard to make a plan or follow it through step by step. Doctors at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) believe these problems are related to the way the brain functions after becoming ill.

NIMH is testing:

- Modafinil (FDA-approved for day-time sleepiness)
- Tolcapone (FDA-approved for Parkinson's disease)
- Atomoxetine (FDA-approved for Attention Deficit Disorder)

Doctors are testing whether these drugs could improve memory and the way the brain works in people with schizophrenia. NIMH is also studying how genes may make a difference in how these drugs work.

In these research studies, people do not stop taking their current medication(s). The study drug is added to the drugs they take now. The research study includes tests that assess participants' ability to remember, focus, and concentrate, and a brain imaging study called a functional MRI (fMRI). These will measure how well the drug may work and record changes in brain activity.

People may stay up to 12 weeks at the NIMH Schizophrenia Research Program. Tests that include medical, psychiatric, neurological, and pharmacological tests are done to see whether a person can be part of the study. The medication phase of the study lasts 3 or 5 weeks. Once the research is completed, the person stays in the inpatient research program so that the clinical team can complete all evaluations, treatment assessments and discharge planning.

Participants must:

- Be 18 to 50 years old
- Have schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder
- Not have serious alcohol or drug problems
- Not have a history of major medical problems

This inpatient research program is at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. There is no cost for taking part in the study. There is compensation for research study participation.

For more information, call the **NIMH Schizophrenia Program Referral Line** at 1-888-674-6464 or 301-435-8970 (TTY:1-866-411-1010) or email Schizophrenia@mail.nih.gov. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of the Department of Health and Human Services.