

Schizophrenia: Differential Transcriptome and Novel Targets

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A Division of Visual Soft India Private Limited

ISBN-13: 978-93-86258-80-9
FIRST EDITION, OCTOBER 2017, INDIA

Printed & Published by:
VSRD Academic Publishing
A Division of Visual Soft India Private Limited

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Printed & Bound in India

VSRD ACADEMIC PUBLISHING
A Division of Visual Soft (India) Pvt. Ltd.

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Mob.: +91 9956127040 || Web.: www.vsrdpublishing.com || Email: vsrdpublishing@gmail.com

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Mob.: +91 9899936803 || Web.: www.vsrdpublishing.com || Email: vsrdpublishing@gmail.com

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Mob.: +91 9956127040 || Web.: www.vsrdpublishing.com || Email: vsrdpublishing@gmail.com

PREFACE


Schizophrenia is one of the most complex and disabling diseases to affect mankind. Relatively little is known about its nature and its origins, and available treatments are inadequate for most patients. As a result, there are inevitable controversies about what causes it, how to diagnose it, and how best to treat it. Schizophrenia has been a controversial topic since the term was first proposed by Eugen Bleuler to describe a uniquely human syndrome of profoundly disturbed behavior. In the years following Bleuler's original work the controversies have continued at least as vigorously, but their content has changed. The debate is no longer about the nature of intrapsychic mechanisms, or whether schizophrenia really exists, or whether it is an illness as opposed to a life choice, or whether it is an important public health concern. Indeed, a recent editorial in *Nature* reified the current status of schizophrenia in the biomedical research establishment by declaring, 'Schizophrenia is arguably the worst disease affecting mankind, even AIDS not excepted' (*Nature* Editorial, 1988). The debate has shifted away from the view that schizophrenia is caused by a fault in the infant-mother psychological relationship.


However, in the past decade, there has been an explosion of new research, with dramatic discoveries involving genetic etiology and epidemiological risk factors. There has also been a catalog of new drugs coming to market, and controversy about the relative advantages and disadvantages of newer compared with older therapies. In addition, developing technologies in genomics, molecular biology and neuroimaging provide streams of new information.

This textbook of schizophrenia represents a major shift of thinking influenced by the recent changes in our understanding of the brain, the developments in methodology which have influenced scientifically informed notions of our clinical practice, and the changes in our culture which have led to new concepts of management and treatment and a new understanding of the factors which are likely to affect relapse. Promising as some of the basic science may seem, schizophrenia is still a disease whose diagnosis depends on clinical acumen and careful assessment.

This book represents a definitive, essential, and up-to-date reference text on schizophrenia. It extensively and critically digests and clarifies recent advances and places them within a clinical context. This includes a series of chapters that discuss Currently Recognized Genes for Schizophrenia: High-Resolution Chromosome Ideogram Representation (Chapter 2), Epigenetics and "Gene X Environment" Interactions (Chapter 3), Chromatin Regulators Linked to Schizophrenia via Evidence from Genetics and Functional Genomics (Chapter 4), Transcriptome Study of Differential Expression

(Chapter 5), Variations in Differential Gene Expression Patterns across Multiple Brain Regions (Chapter 6), Drug Targets Differentially Expressed in the Prefrontal Cortex of Schizophrenia Patients (Chapter 7). The increased recognition of the importance of neuropsychological deficits in the chronic disability and outcome of this illness is highlighted by several contributors.

 *Nikunaj Bhardwaj*

 *Swati Pandit*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my appreciation to the many people who saw me through this book; to all those who provided support, talked things over, read, wrote, offered comments, allowed me to quote their remarks and assisted in the editing, proofreading and design.


I would like to thank my Parents for enabling me to publish this book. Above all I want to thank my wife, my sweet kids (Noni and Ninni) and the rest of my family, who supported and encouraged me in spite of all the time it took me away from them. It was a long and difficult journey for them.

I would like to thank Dr. Owais Ahmad Shah, Dr. Pratibha Teotia and Dr. Sujata Arora who have read this material and given me many valuable suggestions for improving the presentation.

I would like to thank Dr. Himanshu, Dr. Vishnu, Dr. Bhupendra and Dr. Sushil for helping me in the process of selection and editing.

Thanks to VSRD Academic Publishing (A Division of Visual Soft India Private Limited) without you this book would never find its way to the Web and to so many people who cannot read the printed book.

Last and not least: *“I beg forgiveness of all those who have been with me over the course of the years and whose names I have failed to mention”.*

 Nikunaj Bhardwaj

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