

Management of resistant schizophrenia

Ghanem, Muhammad

Ain-Shams Univ., Cairo (EGY). Inst. of Psychiatry

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About 10-30% of patients with schizophrenia have little with no response to antipsychotic medications, and up to an additional 30% of patients have partial responses to treatment, meaning that they exhibit an improvement in psychopathology but continue to have mild to severe residual symptoms. Treatment resistance is defined as little or no symptomatic response to multiple (at least two) antipsychotic trials of an adequate duration (at least six weeks) and dose (therapeutic range).

In assessing treatment resistance, clinicians should carefully evaluate whether the patient has had an adequate trial of an antipsychotic, including whether the dose is adequate and whether the patient has been taking the medication as prescribed. Strategies for improving adherence as well as developing a therapeutic alliance promoting treatment adherence will be discussed in this presentation.