

Early psychosis in central Vietnam: A longitudinal study of short-term functional outcomes and their predictors

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ABSTRACT

Background: Few longitudinal studies have investigated the functional outcomes of individuals with recent-onset psychotic illness in low- and middle-income countries.

Aims: To investigate short-term functional remission and its predictors in a central Vietnamese sample.

Methods: A naturalistic six-month prospective cohort study recruited 79 patients of public health facilities who had experienced a first episode of schizophrenia or related illness in the past 18 months. Individuals and their family members were interviewed using standardised assessments of community functioning, symptoms, treatment, demographics and various psychosocial variables. Rates of functional remission (i.e. no or minimal impairment) were calculated based on rigorous, culturally-appropriate criteria. Generalised estimating equations were used to explore predictors of remission.

Results: Rates of global functional remission were 28% at baseline and 53% at follow-up. In individual functional domains, remission was least common for occupational activities, intermediate for relationships and relatively common for daily living activities. Global functional remission was significantly associated with absence of negative and cognitive symptoms, average or better household economic status and unimpaired premorbid functioning.

Conclusions: Remission rates appeared similar to those seen in many international intervention studies. However, individuals from poor households had markedly unfavourable outcomes, suggesting the need for community-based interventions targeting low SES groups.

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