Martin Harrow’s Long-Term Study of Psychotic Patients

Patient Enrollment

- 64 schizophrenia patients
- 81 patients with other psychotic disorders
  - 37 psychotic bipolar patients
  - 28 unipolar psychotic patients
  - 16 other milder psychotic disorders

- Median age of 22.9 years at index hospitalization
- Previous hospitalization
  - 46% first hospitalization
  - 21% one previous hospitalization
  - 33% two or more previous hospitalizations

Long-term Recovery Rates for Schizophrenia Patients

Global Adjustment of Schizophrenia Patients

Spectrum of Outcomes in Harrow’s Study

On Antipsychotics
- Recovered: 5%
- Fair: 46%
- Uniformly Poor: 49%

Off Antipsychotics
- Recovered: 40%
- Fair: 46%
- Uniformly Poor: 16%

Psychotic Symptoms in Schizophrenia Patients Over the Long Term

- Off antipsychotics
- On Antipsychotics

10-year followup:
- Off antipsychotics: 23%
- On Antipsychotics: 79%

15-year followup:
- Off antipsychotics: 28%
- On Antipsychotics: 64%

“In addition, global outcome for the group of patients with schizophrenia who were on antipsychotics was compared with the off-medication schizophrenia patients with similar prognostic status. Starting with the 4.5-year follow-up and extending to the 15-year follow-up, the off-medication subgroup tended to show better global outcomes at each followup.”

Martin Harrow, page 411.
“I conclude that patients with schizophrenia not on antipsychotic medication for a long period of time have significantly better global functioning than those on antipsychotics.”

--Martin Harrow, American Psychiatric Association annual meeting, 2008
Global Adjustment of “Other Psychotic” Patients

Global Adjustment of All Psychotic Patients

Anxiety Symptoms of Schizophrenia Patients

Cognitive Function of Schizophrenia Patients

Scores on abstract thinking

Best

Worst

Relapse Rates Once Patients Are Stable

Recovery Rates

Medication compliant patients throughout 20 years: 17% had one period of recovery.

Those off antipsychotics by year two who then remained off throughout next 18 years: 87% had two or more sustained periods of recovery.

Is very long-term treatment with antipsychotic medications harmful?

--Martin Harrow, 2012