

# HEARING IMPAIRMENT AS RISK FACTOR FOR PSYCHOSIS: REVIEW

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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on how hearing impairment plays a role of risk factor in psychosis, as it is always been a neglected risk factor in psychosis. Major focuses has been given on genetic and environmental factors. This article focuses on various risk factors but mainly explain the hearing impairment as a risk factor and potential reversibility. Similar to visual hallucinations in visually impaired patients, auditory hallucinations often occur in adults with hearing impairment. Research on this association is limited, so present paper explores this association.

**Keywords:** Hearing Impairment, Psychosis, Risk factors.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

Psychosis refers to a mental state in which there is a loss of contact with reality. Psychotic episode or symptoms are regularly experienced by the individuals suffering from schizophrenia or mood disorder. Traditionally, psychotic symptoms are considered as features of “mental illness”, it has been developed over long years ago by the German Psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin in the year 1896. He gave a concept of dementia praecox and mania depression, but later in 1911, the Swiss psychiatrist Bleuler revised his concept and renamed dementia praecox as schizophrenia. Kraepelin in 1915 found the occurrence of persecutory delusions in individuals with a hearing impairment and from then many studies have been done to explore the concept.

Various risk factors affects the psychosis such as prenatal complications, infections, childhood trauma, social factors, stressful life events, migration, urban city and the most neglected factor is hearing impairment.

## 2. RISK FACTORS FOR PSYCHOSIS

Gottesman & Bertelsen, 1989; Tienari et al., 2004 found that both genes and environmental factors have joint effects on the liability to psychosis. The genetic factors start from the moment of conception, through development, birth and maturation. In the recent years, the environmental risk factors have been given more importance and described elaborately: complications during pregnancy and birth, urban birth and upbringing.

Cantor & Selten, 2005; Morrison & Ross, 2005 found that social adversities such as childhood trauma, migration and the discrimination also lead to the development of psychosis. Childhood trauma and the discrimination sometimes lead to the development of negative beliefs about the self, others and the world and induce a paranoid attribution style (Janssen et al, 2003). A risk factor for psychosis which has lately been neglected is the presence of deafness or hearing impairment.

## 3. HEARING IMPAIRMENT AS A RISK FACTOR FOR PSYCHOSIS

Helen Keller in 1968 gave a famous quote- “blindness cut you off from things, while deafness cuts you off from people”. Hearing impairment is highly prevalent and makes it the most common sensory deficit. The individuals having hearing impairment or problems usually experience social isolation and which leads to the development of negative belief for self and others and leads to possibility of having psychotic symptoms. The individual’s with hearing problem incur difficulties

in inferring other people's mental states and the theory of mind also explains the same thing as it is related to the concept of social interaction, when this interaction is impeded because of hearing impairment, the individual do face with difficulties. Many of the patient doesn't enquire back or clear doubt in context to what they heard, which further leads to developing their own negative thought around the content wrong heard by them. These difficulties eventually worsen the psychotic symptoms and at times are the initial reason for developing psychosis.

Selten & Cantor, 2005, 2007 mentions about a long term experience of subordinate position also known as social defeat, may increase risk of psychosis. Biases in social cognitive processes play an important role in the development of positive psychotic symptoms (Freeman, & Bebbington, 2001). Hearing impairment increases the risk for psychosis particularly in young people (Stefanis et al, 2006).

Several studies have investigated the alleged association between hearing impairment and paranoid illness. Cooper et al, 1974, 1976 founded chronic hearing impairment may constitute an important etiological factor in the development of paranoid ideation. Hearing impairment and psychosis was considered to be more common in elderly population but in recent times it is common in young adult and late adolescent (stein and thienhaus, 1993).

There has been evidences regarding the remission of psychotic symptoms after improving hearing conditions in the individuals which indicates that hearing impairment does play a risk factor for psychosis (Linszen M M et al, 2016)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It can be clearly concluded that hearing impairment is one of the major risk factor for psychosis and early hearing impairment leads to development of psychosis in early phase of life as well as in late adulthood but it is more prevalent in elderly population. Looking at numerous studies it will be right to conclude that hearing loss or impairment is an important area to be studied in context of psychosis.

#### 5. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

- Clinical Psychologist should not neglect the risk factor of hearing impairment when dealing with Individual's with psychosis
- The therapist should look for complete medical document of the patient including ENT test
- The therapist should motivate the patient to get treatment for hearing impairment before psychotherapy.

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