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RISK FOR HOSPITALIZATION FOR SCHIZOPHRENIA AND AFFECTIVE DISORDERS AMONG FULL AND HALF SIBLINGS OF PROBANDS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA: A POPULATION-BASED STUDY

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Introduction: Compared to the general population, siblings of patients with schizophrenia have a higher risk of developing schizophrenia.

Objectives: This study analyzed population-based data to examine the risk of hospitalization for schizophrenia and affective disorders among full vs. half siblings of patients with schizophrenia, and among persons with 1 or more siblings with schizophrenia vs. those with 2 or more.

Aims: This study assessed the familial influence of schizophrenia on the development of schizophrenia and other mental disorders in siblings.

Methods: The full (n= 12,555) and half (n=2,707) siblings of 6,115 patients with schizophrenia (ICD F20.0-20.9) were identified from the Israeli Psychiatric Hospitalization Registry. Age and gender matched controls (n=61,048) were identified from the Israeli Population Registry. The sample's psychiatric hospitalizations were recorded from the registry.

Results: Compared to controls, risk for schizophrenia was higher among persons with one or more (OR=9.36, 95%CI: 7.73-11.33) or 2 or more (OR=13.76, 95%CI: 8.84-24.15) full siblings with schizophrenia. Similarly, persons with one or more (OR=7.91, 95%CI: 5.15-12.14) or 2 or more (OR=8.44, 95%CI: 3.57-19.94) half siblings with schizophrenia had a higher risk of schizophrenia. Similarly, risk for hospitalization for affective disorders was higher among persons with one or more (OR=7.29 95%CI: 5.60-9.49) or 2 or more (OR=10.25, 95%CI: 5.50-19.10) full siblings with schizophrenia.

Conclusions: This population-based study strengthens existing knowledge that schizophrenia has a strong familial, perhaps genetic component; and the greater the familial load, the greater the risk. Familial schizophrenia also increases risk for affective disorders, emphasizing the overlap between these disorders.