

Introduction

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The contents of this supplement are based on a symposium which took place in Montreux, Switzerland, in June 1993. There are four main themes. Firstly, Professor Murray highlights current research into *biological aspects* of schizophrenia. He describes work, much coming from his own department, which supports the concept of 'neurodevelopmental' schizophrenia and exhorts us to consider both genetic predisposition and environmental factors, such as infection, in the aetiology of the disorder.

Secondly, great changes are taking place in the *social management* of schizophrenic patients. The successful transfer of many elderly, long-stay patients from two large hospitals in north London to small, community-based facilities is described by Professor Leff and colleagues; future studies will be needed to determine the best way to manage the younger schizophrenic patient who has never been 'long-stay'.

Thirdly, in hospital or out, caring for people with schizophrenia is not cheap; Ms Davies shows that

the *cost* to the community is greater than almost all other illnesses, surpassed only by arthritic and rheumatic disorders.

Finally, *drug treatment* plays a vital role in the management of schizophrenic patients. Professors Kane and Freeman chart the development of antipsychotic drugs, and look towards the future and the possibilities of more effective treatment for schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia, its aetiology and management remain controversial issues. Vigorous discussion followed each session of the symposium. We hope that bringing the symposium to a wider audience will further the debate.

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