

Treatment Goals Of People With Schizophrenia

(NAPSA)—Details emerging from a large-scale survey focusing on treatment goals for schizophrenia shed new light on what physicians and people with schizophrenia feel is important for long-term quality care, according to Ronald J. Diamond, M.D., co-author of the study.

“When we treat people with any kind of chronic illness especially schizophrenia, it’s important that we listen to their life goals, what they want out of treatment and what they want out of life,” said Dr. Diamond a professor of psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, medical director at the Mental Health Center of Dane County and consultant to the Wisconsin Bureau of Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Madison, Wisc. “This study examines the similarities and differences of what schizophrenia patients and their physicians view as primary treatment goals.” Dr. Diamond spoke at the American Medical Association’s 23rd annual Science Reporters Conference.

In the schizophrenia treatment goals survey, physicians and people with stable schizophrenia both reported their top treatment goals were improving mental health and improving overall happiness.

“One of the more surprising results of the survey was how similar the goals of both psychiatrists and people with schizophrenia in outpatient settings were,” Dr. Diamond said. “The idea of truly listening to patients and questioning their goals has really caught on. As we can see from the survey, the top goal of both physicians and people with schizophrenia parallel each other which means as psy-



Life goals are an important focus for successful treatment of schizophrenia.

chiatrists—we’ve got it.”

However some differences in treatment goals remain. People with schizophrenia were more interested and focused on decreasing psychotic symptoms such as hearing voices. In general, physicians were focused on treating symptoms. According to the survey, people with schizophrenia have shifted their focus to life goals rather than treatment goals such as returning to favorite hobbies and activities, decreasing feelings of being isolated due to schizophrenia and improving physical health.

A real problem with schizophrenia is the social stigma, Dr. Diamond said. “We aren’t afraid of someone who is dangerous such as a drunk driver because they could be our neighbor or a cousin. Yet when we see someone who is different and may act strange, we become afraid of them for no real reason,” he said. “Decreasing the stigma we have of people with mental illness is a constant battle. It’s still just the beginning of acknowledging mental illness and incorporating people with mental illness into society.”