

Acute Training Solutions

Mental Health Advanced - Schizoaffective disorder

Schizoaffective disorder is a psychiatric condition. People with this condition experience both psychosis and mood disorders: Psychosis is a loss of contact with reality, and mood disorders may include episodes of mania or depression. Schizoaffective disorder is divided into two subtypes based on the type of mood disorder involved:

Depressive:	Bipolar
Involves major depressive episodes only	Involves manic episodes (high energy with extreme elevated, expansive, or irritable mood) with or without depressive episodes

Sufferers may experience symptoms of psychosis and mood disorders together or separately, often in cycles. That means you'll have periods of improvement followed by symptomatic periods.

Estimates suggest that it's fairly rare and affects less than 1% of the population

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms of schizoaffective disorder vary greatly. Many people experience improvements from time to time. Symptoms include:

Paranoid thoughts	Delusions	Hallucinations
Confusion	Disorganized thoughts or behaviours	Catatonia, inability to move normally
Speaking too quickly	Depression or irritability	Hyperactive or manic mood
Difficulty concentrating	Changes in appetite	Thoughts of suicide
Poor personal hygiene	Trouble sleeping	Social isolation

Social outcomes

Possible social complications of schizoaffective disorder

Similar to those for schizophrenia and major mood disorders. They may include:

- Drug abuse
- Difficulty staying on a treatment regimen
- Suicidal behaviour
- Manic behaviours such as spending sprees and promiscuity

What's the cause of schizoaffective disorder?

Scientists don't fully understand what causes schizoaffective disorder. It results in an abnormality in the chemicals in the brain, such as an mainly an imbalance in serotonin and dopamine. There also appears to be a genetic link. Other contributing factors may include:

- Environmental factors
- Exposure to viruses or toxins while in the womb
- Genetic or birth defects
- Some experts believe that schizoaffective disorder is a form of schizophrenia rather than a separate disorder

Medication and treatment

Some drugs can cause symptoms that resemble those associated with schizoaffective disorder. These drugs include:

- Steroid medications
- Cocaine
- Amphetamines
- Phencyclidine, or PCP

Medications that may be prescribed include:

- Antipsychotics
- Antidepressants
- Mood stabilizers

These medications are always supported with therapy.