

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS OF PATIENTS WITH PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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**Introduction:** The concept of the “social network” (SN) describes the set of social relationships of an individual. SNs of patients with psychotic disorders have often been investigated in the last few decades, however, diverse theories and different assessment methods were utilised within this field of research.

**Objectives:** To assess morphological (size, density, degree) and interactional (direction and intensity) characteristics of SNs of patients with psychotic disorders reported in different studies.

**Aims:** To explore the characteristics of the SNs of psychotic patients and to identify the factors that influence their size and composition.

**Methods:** A systematic literature review was carried out using the databases MEDLINE, PsychInfo and EMBASE. When feasible, the characteristics of SNs were compared across studies.

**Results:** Out of 739 identified studies, 142 reported quantitative findings on SN characteristics. 27 (19%) of them reported figures on the size of SNs in a way that allowed meaningful comparison across studies. For all other SN characteristics, only descriptive accounts were possible. The overall mean network size was 15.2 (SD 9.4). Being single was negatively correlated with SN size.

**Conclusions:** The concept of SNs in psychotic disorders has been underpinned by diverse theoretical frameworks and assessed with a variety of tools. Only a small number of studies were methodologically comparable, which makes findings on SN characteristics and associated factors difficult to interpret. There is a need to develop standardised instruments in order to advance the quality of the research in the field.