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## CAREGIVERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS

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**Introduction:** Finally recognized as a powerful co-therapeutic factor, family caregivers of persons suffering from schizophrenia play an important role in the treatment process.

**Objective:** The aim of our study was to examine the family caregivers' perceptions of antipsychotic medications.

**Method:** In this study, the European Federation of Associations of Families of people with mental illness self-completion questionnaire was used. Data were collected from 40 family members, the key caregivers of 40 schizophrenic patients.

**Results:** Average age of a carer was 56, 97 ( $\pm 11$ , 48) and 65% of them were females. Parents were dominant, caring for an ill son (37, 5%) or daughter (42, 5%). Family caregivers spent every day caring for the ill relative (100%); mean time of caring was 15, 2 years. Lack of education about condition and treatment side effects were seen as main reasons for drug discontinuation. Nearly half of caregivers (45%) stated forgetfulness as an important factor of treatment non-adherence. Every 6th family member had complains about complicated drug routine and too many medications prescribed. At the same time, they considered that keep taking the medication as recommended is very important for the remission achievement and that reaching remission is a long process which usually requires multiple changes of antipsychotic medications (4 changes on average).

**Conclusion:** Family caregivers of schizophrenia sufferers share almost the same considerations about antipsychotic medications with professional caregivers. Further closer collaborations between formal and informal caregivers may help to go beyond some obstacles and to get a better treatment adherence.