

Developing trust and effective care for people with schizophrenia: Patients and Psychiatrists working in partnership

GAMIAN-Europe and European Psychiatric Association (EPA) joint initiative

Project summary

Background: The therapeutic relationship between a patient with schizophrenia and their psychiatrist is an important part of the treatment/care process. A positive experience of treatment and care relies on trust, empathy, mutual understanding, acceptable interventions and comprehensible information. The experience of care based on personal narratives is not so well explored.

Most research has been conducted from the perspective of either patients or clinicians. There has been very little systematic exploration of the experiences of patients with schizophrenia and clinicians and how these interact and develop throughout the care process.

Objectives: To identify the care experience of both patients with schizophrenia and psychiatrists – with a focus on positive and negative experiences, interactions, interventions (including treatment decision-making) and ways to optimize experiences/care and treatment.

Methods: The project has two stages. The first uses a qualitative methodology to capture personal experiences of the treatment and care process, using a semi-structured questionnaire developed for patients with schizophrenia and another for their psychiatrist. The second stage, involves carrying out two focus groups, one of which is to gain the experiences of carers (members of EUFAMI), together with some additional patients. The other focus group will be with members of GAMIAN-EU and the EPA, aimed at formulating conclusions and actions based on the project findings.

Four countries are involved – Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland. Each country representative has been asked to collect data from two psychiatric centres (one rural and one urban). Each treatment center will identify 4 patients and 4 psychiatrists, so 8 patients and psychiatrists will participate in each of the 4 countries. In total there will be 64 participants selected for the study.

Report: A report will be produced jointly by GAMIAN-Europe and the EPA, describing the main patient and clinician experiences, challenges and expectations, offering recommendations to policy makers, clinicians, training institutes and patient representative groups. Recommendations will also cover the needs and experiences of carers.

Timelines for focus groups

Focus group 1 – with carers and patients – 3rd or 4th week Sept 2022

Focus group 2 – with patients and clinicians – Oct or Nov 2022