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## 25th European Congress of Psychiatry Debate

### Debate: Is the concept of schizophrenia useful?

**D001**

#### Pro

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The concept of schizophrenia has undergone many changes since its first inception in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Basically, the concept has stood the tests of time, as it provides useful information about the clinical picture, the clinical course and the available treatment modalities. Any alternative concept will need to show that it provides similar information. The concept has also been useful to establish evidence-based guidelines for diagnosis and treatment, and to provide valuable information as regards psychosocial outcomes. In addition, recent genetic and neurophysiological studies have shown that common grounds of aetiopathogenesis can be identified, in that schizophrenia is a mental disorder with some genetic influences and a common pathway in complex disturbances of brain circuits due to altered neurotransmission. Current research focuses on identifying biomarkers for early detection, another area of mental healthcare in which a staging model of schizophrenia proved useful. This presentation will highlight the most pertinent arguments for keeping schizophrenia as a useful diagnostic and therapeutic concept of a mental disorder.

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**D002**

#### Con

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The analysis of the historical development of the currently used diagnosis schizophrenia in DSM or ICD classification indicates that sticking to established terms and methodologies more and more develops to an obstacle in schizophrenia research. The aim of the currently used operational diagnostic approach was to reach reliability of diagnoses between different psychiatrists and researchers as high as possible. This should improve the communication between different research groups and better the comparison of study results. The aim of a high reliability has surely been reached, however, the expected striking progress in research and clinical praxis failed to materialize till today. Reliability, which means agreement, does not simultaneously means validity. Modern brain and genetic research requires more homogenous clinical syndromes or 'diseases' to examine them with scientifically based methodologies and technologies. The prerequisite for doing this, however, is going back to clinical and empirical realities and to integrate these realities into the development of a new generation of classification systems that are free of dogmatic thinking.

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