Beyond symptom control: what has been achieved and where to go next?

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Despite decades of research, treatments for schizophrenia have largely been limited in their efficacy to treat hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thoughts and behaviour and related agitation/aggression. Apart from reduction of severity of positive symptoms, improved social functioning, increase patient and carer satisfaction with services and reduction in patient drop-out from services are some of the important goals of management. While current pharmacological interventions ameliorate psychotic symptoms but its effects are less so for disabling cognitive and motivational impairments. Specific vocational and psychological interventions, in combination with antipsychotic medication in a context of community-case management, can improve functional outcome but are not widely available. Until we have developed treatments that address the underlying neurobiological vulnerability and protect against environmental risks, we hope that society will treat those who suffer with psychosis with respect, hope, and dignity—rather than stigma, pessimism, and exclusion. This presentation provides a review and critique of currently available pharmacologic and psychosocial treatments in schizophrenia, and focuses on investigational treatments and potential strategies for future pharmacotherapy.