Schizophrenia has eight avatars: Research

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London: In an important first step towards better diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia, researchers have found that there are eight different types of the brain disorder, and not a single type, as earlier thought.

Representational image

Schizophrenia consists of a group made up of eight genetically different types of diseases, each of which presents its own set of symptoms, the researchers said.

It was known so far that approximately 80 percent of the risk of suffering from schizophrenia was hereditary, although scientists have struggled for years to identify which specific genes lead to it.

In this new study, the researchers identified various genes networks that contribute to the existence of eight types of schizophrenia."Genes do not operate on their own, in an isolated manner," said study co-author Igor Zwir, researcher at University of Granada in Spain.

"They rather work with each other as an orchestra," Zwir said.The study involved 4,196 patients diagnosed with schizophrenia besides 3,200 healthy patients who participated as control group."

"What we did with this research is identify the manner in which the genes interact with each other, in an orchestrated manner in the case of healthy patients, or disorganised, as happens in the cases that lead to the different types of schizophrenia", the authors said.

The researchers divided the patients according to the type and seriousness of positive symptoms (such as different types of hallucinations or deliriums), or negative symptoms (such as lack of initiative, troubles in organising thoughts, or lack of connection between emotion and thought).

In parallel, scientists classified the profiles of these symptoms into eight qualitative types of different diseases according to the underlying genetic conditions.

The study appeared in the American Journal of Psychiatry.

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