

the 1990s, the number of people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia has increased in many countries (Murray & Lopez, 1996; World Health Organization, 1993).

There is a need to understand the nature of the illness and the reasons for its increasing prevalence. The illness is a complex one, with aetiology involving both genetic and environmental factors. The illness is also a chronic one, with a high rate of relapse and a need for long-term treatment. The illness is also a socially stigmatized one, with a high rate of social exclusion and a need for social support.

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