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Is Relapse in Schizophrenia an Immuno-Endocrine Mediated Effect?

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Abstract

Clinical course in schizophrenia is often characterized by recurrent relapses, which are associated with adverse outcomes. Immuno-endocrine abnormalities, including inflammation, have been one of the more enduring findings in the field, and several recent findings suggest that relapse in some patients with schizophrenia may be an immuno-endocrine mediated effect. These associations raise the possibility of immune-based treatments for relapse (and/or relapse prevention) in a subset of patients with schizophrenia. This talk will review of studies of immune-endocrine abnormalities in acute psychosis, including patients with first-episode psychosis and/or relapse of chronic schizophrenia. A theoretical framework that attempts to integrate these findings and suggest potential mechanisms whereby immune-endocrine dysfunction might mediate relapse in some patients with schizophrenia will be presented. Limitations of the current literature and suggested future research directions will also be discussed.

Biography

Brian Miller, MD, PhD, MPH, is an Assistant Professor on a research tenure track in the Department of Psychiatry and Health Behavior at Georgia Regents University. He earned a BS in mathematics from Vanderbilt University, a combined MD/MPH degree from The Ohio State University, and a PhD in psychiatric epidemiology from the University of Oulu (Finland). He completed his general psychiatry residency and fellowship in psychotic disorders at GRU, where he served as Chief Resident, and joined the faculty in 2010. Dr Miller's current research focuses on inflammation/ cytokines as a potential clinical state and relapse predictive marker in schizophrenia, and is funded by an NIMH K23 Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award and the NIH Clinical Loan Repayment Program Award. He has been recognized with several young investigator awards, the 2010 Laughlin Fellowship from the American College of Psychiatrists, and a 2011 Exemplary Psychiatrist Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness.