

## **Abstract**

**Background** Social dysfunction is a prominent phenomenon in schizophrenia. It can lead to psychological morbidity in caregivers. Little is known about any benefits of atypical antipsychotics over conventional ones in these outcomes.

**Aims** To compare the effects of haloperidol and risperidone on social functioning and caregivers' experience and psychological well-being after two years of treatment in first-episode schizophrenia, and to identify any predictors of outcomes in these dimensions.

**Method** Thirty-seven patients and their available caregivers were assessed with standardized instruments. Twenty-three of them did not have the type of drug treatment changed throughout the two years. Their data were compared with respect to the type of drug treatment.

**Results** The patients receiving risperidone showed a trend towards interest in getting a job. They might potentially perform better in parental role, but this might have been influenced by marital status and marital relationship. Their caregivers had a higher degree of positive caregiving experience. Social dysfunction was predicted by concurrent negative symptoms. Psychiatric morbidity of caregivers was predicted by negative caregiving experience, which in turn depended on patient factors like young age and hospitalization days.

**Conclusions** Risperidone may be superior to haloperidol in some areas of social dysfunction. It is beneficial to caregiving experience as well. These findings provide a basis for further researches in schizophrenia.

**Key words** Caregivers, haloperidol, risperidone, schizophrenia.