



## 7th European Conference on Integrated Care and Assertive Outreach

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### **Comprehensive Care in All Phases of Severe Mental Illness**

Mental illness is associated with a significant burden of disease, carrying severe consequences for both individuals and society. The burden of disease for mental disorders surpasses that of cancer and cardiovascular diseases. People with severe mental illness require interventions that address their needs across multiple phases and areas of life. While there is considerable heterogeneity in prognosis, a substantial minority experience persistent psychotic symptoms.

In the early phases of psychosis, young individuals often grapple with debilitating psychotic symptoms, suicidal ideation, and challenges in maintaining connections with the labor market or educational institutions. Approximately 25% continue to experience hallucinations a decade after diagnosis, despite medication. Furthermore, life expectancy for individuals with severe mental illness is reduced by approximately 15 years due to excess mortality from suicide, accidents, and a range of medical conditions.

In this lecture, I will outline evidence-based approaches to comprehensive care for severe mental illness. These include:

1. **Early Intervention Services (EIS):** Programs designed to detect and treat psychosis at its onset, significantly improving long-term outcomes.
2. **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT/F-ACT):** A team-based approach that provides intensive, personalized support to individuals with severe mental illness within their communities.
3. **Individual Placement and Support (IPS):** A model focused on helping individuals gain and maintain employment, tailored to their abilities and aspirations.
4. **Supported Accommodation:** Housing solutions that offer stability and support, enabling individuals to live more independently while receiving necessary care.
5. **Virtual Reality Interventions:** Innovative treatments using virtual reality technology to manage and reduce psychotic symptoms, including hallucinations and delusions.
6. **Initiatives to Reduce Excess Mortality:** Strategies aimed at addressing the elevated rates of physical health conditions, promoting lifestyle changes, and improving access to preventive healthcare.

By integrating these evidence-based approaches, we can create a more holistic framework to address the complex needs of individuals with severe mental illness, ultimately improving their quality of life and long-term outcomes.