

## **Recent Trends of Schizophrenia Research in Korea**

**Yong Sik Kim, MD, PhD,**

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science and Institute of Human Behavioral Medicine,

Seoul National University College of Medicine, Republic of Korea.

E-mail: [kys@snu.ac.kr](mailto:kys@snu.ac.kr)

The place that schizophrenia takes in the field of psychiatry is just as important in Korea as any other country. The number of schizophrenia patients in Korea is estimated to be two to three hundred thousand (Cho et al, 2001), and about thirty-five thousand of them were being hospitalized in 2003 which comprised 61% of the total hospitalized psychiatric patients. Therefore, schizophrenia has been the mainstream topic to be studied in the field of psychiatry in Korea. The Korean Neuropsychiatric Association (KNPA) holds 23 associated research societies, and among them, Korean Academy of Schizophrenia, Korean College of Neuropsychopharmacology, and Korean Society of Biological Psychiatry, along with the KNPA, have been mostly involved in the study of schizophrenia and the related research findings were published mainly in their respective journals. The main topics published in major Korean and international journals from 1998 to 2005, were related to psychopharmacology, genetics, clinical topics, and neuroimaging. Not only the individual research teams have been actively engaged in schizophrenia research activities, but also various researchers have formed networks to gather their efforts on standardizing the drug treatment of schizophrenia in Korea, i.e. Korean schizophrenia treatment algorithm project, and standardization of various scales for schizophrenia in the Korean population. The major portions of research funds for schizophrenia are provided by Korean Government except the clinical trials which are covered by multinational pharmaceutical companies. There is no National Research Institute covering schizophrenia, such as NIMH in America. Recently, a number of researchers have become deeply interested and active in the studies related to “early psychosis” and “community mental health”. At the present, schizophrenia research in Korea appears to closely follow the international trends and will continue to do so for some time to come.