

OUTLINE THE CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA (8 marks)



Schizophrenia is a psychotic disorder characterised by distorted thinking, poor interpersonal skills, impaired emotional responses and a loss of touch with reality.

Psychotic disturbances are usually interspersed with more normal periods of functioning.

Under the DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria, at least 2 positive symptoms should be present for at least 1 month.

Positive symptoms include **delusions** (bizarre beliefs), **experiences of thought control** (believing they're under control from an alien force), **hallucinations** (unreal perceptions of the environment) and **disordered thinking** (such as thought insertion or feeling their thoughts are being broadcasted).

Negative symptoms include **affective flattening** (reduction of emotional expression), **alogia** (lessening of speech fluency), **avolition** (inability to carry out routine activities) and **social withdrawal**.

Additionally, there are generally regarded as being 3 different types of schizophrenia; disorganised, catatonic and paranoid.