

### **TABLE 13.3** Clinical “Facts” of Schizophrenia

- Schizophrenia is generally diagnosed on the basis of the presence of positive symptoms in conjunction with impaired social function in the absence of significant mood symptoms, other recognizable neurological illness, or substance use that can account for the psychotic symptoms.
- The nosological boundaries between schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders are indistinct.
- There is significant heterogeneity in neurobiology, clinical manifestations, course, and treatment response across patients.
- Schizophrenia is characterized by an admixture of positive, negative, disorganization, cognitive, psychomotor, and mood symptoms.
- The severity of different symptom clusters varies across patients and through the course of the illness.
- There is a generalized but highly variable cognitive impairment.
- There may be additional specific impairment in a range of cognitive functions (such as executive functions, memory, psychomotor speed, attention, and social cognition).
- Cognitive impairments are present prior to onset of psychosis and persist during the course of the illness.
- There is a higher occurrence of obesity and cardiovascular disease.
- There is increased prevalence of cigarette smoking and other substance use disorders.
- There is increased suicidality.
- There is some phase-specific increase in violent behavior.
- There are significant premorbid impairments in a substantial proportion of patients.
- Onset of psychotic symptoms is usually during adolescence or early adulthood.
- The age of onset is earlier in males.
- There is an approximate doubling of age-standardized mortality.
- Schizophrenia is frequently a chronic and relapsing disorder with generally incomplete remissions.
- Social outcomes include reduced rates of employment and financial independence, and increased likelihood of homelessness and incarceration.
- Poor outcome is predicted by male gender, early age of onset, prolonged period of untreated illness, and severity of cognitive and negative symptoms.