

schizophrenic patients that had been discharged from hospital. He found that, in general, those who spent more time with their families tended to have a higher rate of relapse. Looking more closely at the family environment Brown found that certain features of intra-familial communication seemed to be associated with a greater chance of relapse. Brown et al suggested that relapse was more likely in families with high expressed emotion. High EE families have a number of important features in their communication style:

- Criticism – expressing disapproval of the patient
- Hostility- expressing animosity towards the patient
- Emotional Over-involvement – being intrusively involved in the patient's life.
- Kavanagh (1992) compared the relapse rate of patients with high and low EE families. She found that patients discharged into high EE families were 3.7 times more likely to suffer a relapse. In general the EE model has been very successful at predicting relapse and has been confirmed in a number of cross cultural studies.
- At the moment EE has only been confirmed as a factor in the relapse of schizophrenic patients and it is unknown whether it actually plays a role in the onset of the disorder.

**Conclusions:**

*Data seems to suggest some interaction between biological, psychological and social factors. There is not one single precipitating cause- reflecting the complexity of the disorder. However, some data suggests that the cause may differ for positive and negative symptoms. Negative symptoms tend to be associated with a history of birth and pregnancy complications whereas positive symptoms are associated with family instability.*

*Needless to say there remains a great need for further research to understand the complex way in which possible causes interact to produce schizophrenic symptoms.*