

Landmark study favors talk therapy over drugs in schizophrenia treatment

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More than two million people in the United States have a diagnosis of [schizophrenia](#), and the treatment for most of them mainly involves strong doses of antipsychotic drugs that blunt hallucinations and delusions but can come with unbearable side effects, like severe weight gain or debilitating tremors.

Now, [results of a landmark government-funded study](#) call that approach into question. The findings, from by far the most rigorous trial to date conducted in the United States, concluded that schizophrenia patients who received smaller doses of antipsychotic medication and a bigger emphasis on one-on-one talk therapy and family support made greater strides in recovery over the first two years of treatment than patients who got the usual drug-focused care.

The report, to be published in The American Journal of Psychiatry and funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, comes as Congress debates [mental health](#) reform and as interest in the effectiveness of treatments grows amid a debate over the possible role of mental illness in mass shootings.

Its findings have already trickled out to government agencies: On Friday, the Centers for [Medicare](#) & [Medicaid](#) Services published in its influential guidelines a strong endorsement of the combined-therapy approach. Mental health reform bills now being circulated in Congress “mention the study by name,” said Dr. Robert K. Heinssen, the director of services and intervention research at the centers, who oversaw the research.

Read full, original post: [Talk Therapy Found to Ease Schizophrenia](#)