Abstract Guidelines

Rivers of Connection:
Integrating research, practice & lived experience

AUSTRALIAN
PSYCHOSIS CONFERENCE
29th -30th July 2025

Abstract Guidelines

Formatting:

- Abstracts must be written in English, using Times New Roman, 12pt, single line spacing.

- Do not include references, tables, or figures.

- Carefully check spelling and grammar. The submitter is responsible for ensuring the abstract is error-free; the committee will not correct any mistakes in the published version.

- Spell out abbreviations or acronyms fully on first mention and use the abbreviation thereafter.

Word Limits:

Counting only Background, Methods, Results and Conclusions sections, word limits are:

- Lightning Presentations: Abstract must **not exceed** 300 words.

- Oral and Symposium Presentations: Abstract must **not exceed** 500 words.

Title, authors, affiliations, disclosures, and acknowledgements not included in word limits.

Example templates: Oral or Lightning presentation

The Impact of Social Determinants on Recovery Trajectories in Individuals with Psychosis

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Background: Recovery from psychosis is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors beyond clinical interventions. Social determinants, including socioeconomic status, housing stability, social support, and access to education and employment, play a crucial role in shaping recovery outcomes. Despite growing recognition of these factors, their specific contributions to recovery trajectories in individuals with psychosis remain underexplored. The

aim of this study was to assess the relative contributions of social determinants to the recovery of people experiencing their first episode of psychosis.

Method: Surveys about psychological, social and lifestyle determinants were disseminated at Early Psychosis clinics at seven sites across Australia. Participants consented for evaluation of routine care databases to assess subsequent access to services and re-admissions over 12 months. Variables related to social determinants, including income, housing status, education level, and social network support, were assessed alongside clinical measures of symptom severity, functioning, and quality of life. Multivariate regression analyses were used to identify the relative impact of each determinant on recovery outcomes.

Results: Preliminary findings indicate that stable housing, robust social support, and higher levels of education are significantly associated with better recovery outcomes, including reduced symptom severity, improved functional status, and enhanced quality of life. In contrast, individuals facing socioeconomic disadvantages and social isolation were more likely to experience prolonged recovery periods and poorer outcomes. These results underscore the critical role of social determinants in the recovery process and highlight the need for comprehensive support systems that address these factors.

Conclusions: These findings suggest that holistic approaches involving families and community re-integration may improve recovery of people experience their first episode of psychosis. Greater connection with community organisations and increased funding for preventative measures could reduce hospitalisations.

Example templates: Symposium

Exploring the Role of Gut Microbiota in Mental Health: Implications for Treatment

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Background: Recent research has uncovered a significant relationship between gut microbiota and mental health, suggesting that the gut-brain axis plays a crucial role in the development and management of psychiatric disorders. However, the mechanisms by which gut microbiota influence mental health remain poorly understood.

Method: The symposium will feature three presentations:

1. *Gut Microbiota and Depression:* An overview of the evidence linking gut microbiota with depression, including potential pathways such as inflammation, neurotransmitter regulation, and stress response.

2. *Probiotics and Mental Health:* A review of clinical trials investigating the use of probiotics as a treatment for anxiety and depression, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in translating preclinical findings into clinical practice.

3. *Future Directions:* A discussion on the emerging technologies and methodologies that could enhance our understanding of the gut-brain axis, including metabolomics, neuroimaging, and microbiome profiling.

Results:

1. *Gut Microbiota and Depression:* Studies have consistently shown that individuals with depression exhibit distinct alterations in their gut microbiota composition compared to healthy controls. For example, a reduction in microbial diversity, particularly in the abundance of certain beneficial bacterial genera like *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*, has been associated with depressive symptoms. The presentation will also highlight findings on the role of gut microbiota in modulating the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, inflammation, and neurotransmitter production, which are all pathways implicated in depression.

2. *Probiotics and Mental Health:* Clinical trials investigating the use of probiotics, prebiotics, and psychobiotics (probiotics specifically targeting mental health) have yielded promising but mixed results. Several randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have reported improvements in anxiety and depressive symptoms following probiotic supplementation, particularly with strains such as *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* and *Bifidobacterium longum*. The presentation will discuss the challenges in standardizing probiotic interventions, such as differences in strains, dosages, and study designs, as well as the potential for combining probiotics with other treatment modalities to enhance efficacy.

3. *Gut-Brain Axis Mechanisms:* Emerging evidence suggests that the gut-brain axis operates through multiple, interrelated mechanisms. Key findings include the identification of gut-derived metabolites, such as short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), which can cross the blood-brain barrier and influence brain function. Additionally, gut microbiota have been shown to modulate systemic inflammation, which is increasingly recognized as a contributor to psychiatric disorders. The presentation will also explore

the potential role of diet and nutrition in shaping gut microbiota and, consequently, mental health outcomes.

Conclusions: Understanding the gut-brain axis offers promising new avenues for the treatment of psychiatric disorders. However, further research is needed to clarify the mechanisms involved and to develop effective, personalized interventions. This symposium will contribute to ongoing discussions in the field by providing an up-to-date synthesis of the literature and identifying key areas for future research.