

# Beware of **Misinformation**

On May 1, 2021, the Washington Post released an article online, entitled “Doctors said the boy was suffering from teenage psychosis. What he really had was a rare genetic condition”. The genetic condition the article refers to is the chromosome **22q11.2 deletion syndrome (22q11.2DS)**.

While an enticing and moving story, we, clinicians and researchers working with people with 22q11.2DS and their families, are concerned about several incorrect statements in the article.

Members of the 22q11.2 Society, the International 22q11.2 Brain and Behavior Consortium (IBBC), and leaders of the International 22q11.2 Foundation, Inc. have issued comments regarding this article which can be read on [www.22qsociety.org](http://www.22qsociety.org).

In short, the main problems with this article are the following:

1. The drug mentioned in the article, metyrosine, has not been studied in a standard clinical trial to ensure it is safe, or truly effective, either for the treatment of schizophrenia in the general population, or in those with 22q11.2DS.
2. The article suggests that it is somehow a “mistake” to make a diagnosis of a psychotic disorder in someone with 22q11.2DS who suffers from psychosis. This is incorrect. Just because an illness occurs as part of a genetic disorder does not mean that it is somehow not the same illness as in other people. If the person with a 22q11.2 deletion has a heart disease recognizable as tetralogy of Fallot, we would call it tetralogy of Fallot. This is the same for a brain disease like psychotic illness.
3. There is much scientific evidence and clinical experience to support that the signs, symptoms, and course of a psychotic illness called schizophrenia are the same in someone who has 22q11.2DS as in others with this illness.
4. If we know what it is, we know what to do. People with treatable psychiatric conditions, including schizophrenia, respond to treatments that have proven their effectiveness and safety over many decades. This is the case for people all over the world, including people with 22q11.2DS. We look forward to clinical trials of new treatments that will also prove to be effective and safe.

If you, or someone you love, has any health concerns, please contact your local healthcare provider. Thank you.

A message from the 22q11.2 Society  
[www.22qsociety.org](http://www.22qsociety.org)

