

## **CHAPTER 5: LIMITATIONS:**

Because of the retrospective design of the study some important clinical characteristics were not recorded and it is possible that some of the relapses may not have been recorded because of poor communication between acute hospitals and community mental health clinics. The design also raises the question of patient's ability to recall events over several weeks in between clinic visits which is compounded by the fact that patients with schizophrenia suffer from cognitive impairment. These problems may be resolved by doing a prospective study.

The study is not inclusive of all the reported factors that are associated with relapse in schizophrenia. Factors such as pre-morbid level of functioning, expressed emotion and duration of untreated psychosis were not considered in this study and are more likely to be obtained from a cohort study. The small sample size may have limited our ability to detect statistically meaningful differences when analysing for factors associated with relapse.

This study is limited in its generalizability because our study population were patients who presented to specialised mental health clinics. Some patients may have been treated / attended to in the emergency room of the hospital and treated for relapses without inclusion into the study. Therefore a study involving more clinics and in other regions and provinces is recommended. Notwithstanding these limitations the findings were significant and different from published data and warrant further investigations.