

Memory disorders and alzheimer's



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Memory is the faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information (Schacter). You can recall memories of anything that occurred in your life from the time you were able to start remember things to present time. Problems remembering things that have happened throughout your life can be caused by a psychological disorder. Memory disorders can be progressive, like Alzheimer's or Huntington's disease, or immediate, like those resulting from traumatic head injury. Exacerbated by the effects of aging, most memory disorders remain the single greatest risk factor for neurodegenerative diseases in general (Mastin).

Main causes of memory loss can include medications, alcohol or other drugs, sleep deprivation, depression and stress, a head injury such as a concussion, nutritional deficiency, or even a stroke (Smith). Most experiments designed to test for memory loss have been criticized for having a low validity since it must be done in a laboratory, an artificial situation. People are removed from every day life and asked to take part in a psychological experiment. They are told what to do by the " experimenter", they may even be put in a place with a bunch of strangers. For many people, this is a new experience, isolated from their everyday lives (Mcleod).

Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory, thinking skills, and eventually the ability to complete a task. Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease generally occurs when a person reaches their mid 60's. Estimates vary, but experts suggest that over 5 million people in America may have Alzheimer's. This disease is currently ranked sixth for cause of death in the United States (Education). Damage to the brain tends to start about a decade before any symptoms start to show.

During this stage of the disease, people are just about symptom free, but toxic changes are taking place in the brain (Education).

The Memory system has three stages, Encoding, Storage, and Retrieval. When information comes into the memory system, it needs to be changed into a code that the system will understand so that it can store it. This process is like when a person is going to another country and they have to transfer their currency so that they can buy things in the other country. For example, a word may be stored into your memory after it is changed into a sound or even a scent. Memory storage has to do with where the memory is stored, how it is stored, how long the memory lasts for, and how much of this specific memory can be stored. The way we store information can affect the way we retrieve it. Many different studies have gone into explaining short term and long term memory and how it is stored or taken in. Memory retrieval is when a memory is taken out of storage. A lot of times, when we cannot remember something it's because we are unable to retrieve it. When we are asked to retrieve a memory, it becomes very easy to tell whether it is coming from short term memory or long term memory (McLeod).

Almost all of the research conducted on memory is done through a laboratory. Those who are a part of the experiment are given memory tests to take, such as remembering numbers pictures etc. It is sometimes hard to validate these studies because they are done in a laboratory with a controlled environment and are not a part of everyday life. In many cases, the tasks are almost meaningless. Psychologists use the term ecological validity to refer to the extent to which the findings of research studies can be generalized to other settings (McLeod). An experiment has high ecological

validity if its findings can be generalized, that is applied or extended, to settings outside the laboratory (Mcleod).

Dementia can be another big cause of memory loss. People with dementia may have problems with short-term memory. Such as keeping track of their wallet or purse, remembering where their car keys are, planning and preparing meals, leaving a neighborhood, and even having a conversation with someone. Many dementias are progressive, meaning symptoms start out slowly and gradually get worse Professional evaluation may detect a treatable condition (Association). Even if symptoms suggest dementia, being diagnosed early is the best thing to happen and gives the maximum amount of benefits for available treatments and the opportunity to attend clinical appointments to help with the Dementia. Dementia is caused by damage to brain cells. This damage interferes with the ability of brain cells to communicate with each other (Association). When brain cells are unable to communicate freely, problems with feelings, memory, and functions may occur.

The brain has many distinct regions, each of these regions are responsible for a particular function. When the cells in a region are damaged, that region is unable to carry out its functions properly (Association).

Most scientist think that the human mind is too complex to explain. Even though so many researches have been carried out on the human brain, nobody knows for sure on which the model of human memory is based.

There are two main reasons that psychologists think that we forget information, storing information in your memory but we are unable to

remember it when we need to, and that the human mind basically just forgets the information, and all physical traces of the memory disappear from the mind (Partners).

Memorization is a method of recalling information to know certain things very easily. Rote learning is the method that is most often used. Methods of memorizing information has been the subject over the years with some writes, one being Cosmos Rossellius using visual alphabets. The spacing effect shows that an individual is more likely to remember a list of items when rehearsal is spaced over an extended period of time (Schacter). There is another effect which is the Zeigarnik effect which states that people remember incomplete tasks better than the completed ones. The Method of loci uses spatial memory to memorize non-spatial information. (Schacter)

Memory affects our lives in so many different ways. Without the ability to remember things, we would never get anything done. If we have bad memories of something, then it could cause stress to our daily lives. We can improve our brain memory through many different memory exercises. Drugs can deteriorate memory; alcohol is one of the biggest in this field. Many people's jobs rely on having good memory. Without the human brain functioning correctly, humans would be nothing. We would not be able to get anything done or function at all and that's really crazy to think about.

Memory is something that we deal with every moment of every day. We would be unable to develop skills and follow through with simple motor functions without it. Memory disorders can be some of the biggest problems with people. The inability to remember simple things can cause people to go insane.

Memory is related to psychology in many different ways involving short term memory, long term memory, the processes in storing and recollecting memory, the many different ways to lose memory, and even the ways to improve it. Without Memory, we would be nothing and we would have nothing. The world would be completely different.

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