

# Causes of abnormality essay

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



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This paper explores abnormality as a disorder and highlights the medical and psychological explanations for the causes of abnormality. It begins by defining abnormality and evaluates the causes of abnormality. Considered herein are the medical (biological) causes and Psychological causes.

## **Definition**

Abnormality is basically defined as the deviation from the normal. Four criteria are considered when defining abnormality. They include distress, impairment, risk to self or others, and socially and culturally unacceptable behavior. Distress is very common in life and is normally characterized by emotional or physical pain. When the level of pain is so great, the individual may find it difficult to function well. Impairment entails a reduction in an individual's ability to function as required. Abnormality is also considered when the behaviors and thoughts of an individual are threatening to others, either physically or psychologically. The last criterion is the behavior that is not within the norms of social and cultural context where it takes place. A

behavior that is odd within a given society may be very common elsewhere. Based on the four criteria above, the definition of abnormality is not as straightforward as it appears. There are complexities in diagnosing the abnormal conditions.

## **Causes of abnormality**

Three dimensions have been considered by the social scientists in trying to understand the reasons why people behave or act in manners that are considered as abnormal. The dimensions are biological (medical), psychological, and sociocultural. Abnormality results from complex sets of determinants in the body, mind, and social context of individual. However, in this case, emphasis is laid on the body (biological/medical) and the mind (psychological).

## **Biological (medical) explanation**

In understanding the causes of abnormality in the behavior, an evaluation of the individual's body is carried out. An assumption is made that both the psychological and behavioral abnormalities are caused by biological factors. These factors include genetics, infection, chemicals, and the environmental factors. Based on genetics, the genes children inherit from the parents are the “blueprint” for their bodies and brains. An abnormality in the genes can thus result in abnormalities in brain functionality of an individual, which also results in abnormal behavior. Infections can result in abnormality in that they get into the brain and cause widespread damages since the brain itself lacks immune response. The damage of the brain can make an individual to have an abnormal experience and behave in abnormal manner.

For proper operation, the brain relies on various chemicals (hormones and neurotransmitters) in a correct proportion. It is these chemicals that send messages around the nervous system and the brain. An imbalance (too little or too much) of these chemicals can make the brain to abnormally function. Based on the medical explanation, environment also plays a role in abnormality. The experience of a person such as stress can result in biological reactions with knock-on effect on the functionality of the brain. The environment also contains some pollutants and toxins that directly affect the brain's functionality, e. g. mercury (which causes irrational behavior) and lead (which affects the development of children).

### **Psychological explanation (The Cognitive Model)**

This model is founded on the idea that faulty behavior is caused by faulty thinking. According to the model, irrational beliefs and the illogical errors result from negative thoughts (Brown, 2012). It highlights three main areas as described below.

Beck's Cognitive Triad is the cycle which leads to depression. Its components are generally the negative view such as those about the world, oneself, and the future, which in turn leads to one another. Three biases add to the irrational beliefs and the negative thoughts. They include attention, reasoning, and memory. Individuals with anxiety disorders normally pay attention to the information for which they have anxiety, which in turn triggers maladaptive (negative) thoughts. Psychological disorders result in biases in reasoning of individuals, while depression makes them recall negative information leading to irrational beliefs. Seligman's Theory of

Attribution stipulates that the behavior of an individual is affected by how he/she perceives an event.

## **Conclusion**

The causes of abnormality are vast, ranging from biological to psychological. Medical explanation genes, infection, chemicals, and environmental factors, all cause abnormality. The cognitive model in psychological explanation reveals that the behavior of an individual is based on thinking and, faulty thinking results into faulty behavior.

## **Reference**

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