

Evaluation of three common mental disorders



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Evaluation of three common mental disorders: Eating Disorders, Schizophrenia and OCD

Introduction

This essay will look to explain and evaluate three of the most common mental disorders which are:-

- Eating Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD)

The essay will look at a range of different types of psychological explanations and evaluating whether each explanation holds any strengths and or weaknesses. The essay will be concluding with a summary of the findings of the evaluation of the explanations.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are characterised by an abnormal attitude towards food that causes individuals to change their eating habits and behaviour (NHS choices, 2014)

Behavioural theories suggest that all behaviours are learnt through the conditions of the environment. They explain that the behaviour that is learnt i. e. dieting becomes a habit through stimulus responses, this is called classical conditioning. If after dieting praise is received because of the affect of their attempts being accomplished, or that a new self image is created this will engage in repetition of the same activity to achieve the same

satisfaction. Operant conditioning is achieved when praise is reinforced by others admiration.

This approach to explain eating disorder to a degree is helpful in understanding the disorder, being a learned habit. As mainly eating disorder is widespread in the western world, and is influenced by the social norm of being thin is attractive, a size zero culture (Gross, R. 2010). The research by Hill (1996) has shown that women's fashion magazines play a part in shaping young girls perception of desirable figures Anorexia. This research outlines that young girls see and learn the current trend. However research studied by Touyz et al (1988) reports that there has been a case of anorexia in a woman, which had been blind since birth, therefore this cannot be a disorder that is learnt as the person cannot ' see' the behaviour to learn from it. This shows that the disorder is multidetermined and that there are other factors and causes that contribute to the disorder and not just environment, culture and social norms. The research carried out by Fedoroff and McFarlane (1998), show that cultural factors can only be understood as they interact with the psychology and biology of the vulnerable individual, a cultural cannot cause a disorder. This research clarifies that there maybe, factors that contribute to a disorder, but factors cannot be the cause the reason for the disorder.

Cognitive theories give importance to the thought processes of the individual with the eating disorder. The thoughts of the individual shape their actions i. e. ' people will only love me if I am thin' the study by Garner Bemis (1982), outlines that people with psychological distortion have unrealistic expectations in life and try to achieve them.

The above explanations are good, but do not take in to account the biological approach where Strober & Katz studies show that eating anorexia can run in families. However just one approach or explanation cannot be correct. This disorder has many factors and causes for it. As we may 'blame' the media or social norms for exploiting young girls, but this does not explain why only a few women are effected, and why just women why not men as well, as the media also focuses on men having the perfect slim figure. There may be a gene within that individual that makes them more open to the disease, or maybe it could be the fact that their thought processes are effect for them to think rationally. There is no right answer.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a long term mental illness that causes a range of psychological systems. These include hallucination, hearing and seeing something that does not exist. Delusions, unusual beliefs which are not based on reality. Muddle thoughts due to hallucinations and delusions and change in behaviour (NHS choices, 2014)

Biological theories state that schizophrenia is a genetic disorder, by inheriting the gene from birth. The study carried out by Heston (1966), showed that inheritance does play a part in the disorder Schizophrenia: Explanations and Treatments (2015). This study has a strong advantage to the explanation; however this study does not take into account environmental factors such as stress that can also play a part in the disorder. Also that there may be other genes that could cause the disorder.

Cognitive theories suggest schizophrenia is due to faulty information processing. There is catatonic breaking in auditory attention, which makes social interaction difficult as individuals are overloaded with auditory information. The individual fail to monitor their own thoughts. There are no known cases to approve this theory Schizophrenia: explanations and treatments (2015). Also the cause of the disorder is not explored but the symptoms are. The disorder is only however tested on adults and children are not tested, this could suggest that later on in life, as the individuals experience life's stresses, stress could be the cause or factor for this disorder.

Biochemical theory explain the disorder in terms of in individuals suffering from this disorder have excess of dopamine, which is active in the limbic system in the brain controlling emotions Schizophrenia: explanations and treatments (2015). This was proven with the studies carried out by Iverson. However the studies could not clarify is lack of dopamine caused schizophrenia or did schizophrenia caused lack of dopamine.

Looking at all the explanation and studies, it seems that schizophrenia is better explained will all theories taken into mine. As no one explanation can both explain the cause and symptoms of this disorder.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is a mental health condition, where an individual has obsessive thoughts and compulsive activity. An obsession is an unwanted and unpleasant thought, image or urges that repeatedly come in to an individual's mind causing feeling of anxiety, disgust or unease. A

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compulsion is repetitive behaviour or mental act that the individual feels they need to carry out to temporarily relieve the unpleasant feeling brought on by the obsessive thoughts. NHS choice, 2014.

Behavioural theories suggest that OCD is an extreme form of learned avoidance behaviour, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Introduction, Explanations and Treatment (2015). This explanation takes into account anxiety, but does not address learned behaviours that are picked up from the environment. The study carried out by Meyer & Cheeser (1970) shows that compulsions are learned responses which are a way of reducing the anxiety, if the behaviour reduces the anxiety it becomes reinforced and repeated. However avoidance behaviours themselves cause anxiety, therefore it is not a learned behaviour to reduce the anxiety. On the whole behavioural therapies are very effective Baxter et al (1992) studies that not only do these therapies reduce the symptoms but also bring changes to the biochemical activity. This study shows that as the disorder is due to anxiety and the physical activities can be controlled with the help of therapies.

Cognitive theories suggest that OCD is the result of faulty and irrational ways of thinking at an extreme. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Introduction, Explanations and Treatment (2015). This explanation has some weakness as the study carried out by Sher et al (1983) shows that individuals that scored high with OCD have memory deficit therefore suggesting that the disorder is not about thoughts.

Biochemical theory suggests that OCD is due to deficiency of serotonin, which regulates mood and behaviour, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:

Introduction, Explanations and Treatment (2015). Therefore drug therapy is advised. Study carried out by Zohar et al (1996) have proven that 60% of OCD sufferers benefited from the therapy, but Lydiard et al (1996) found that drug only partly reduce the symptoms, they are not the cure.

OCD is a very complex disorder to understand, and no one theory can fully explain the cause and the symptoms for this disorder.

Evaluation

Throughout the essay theories and research have proven that to just take one explanation does not give the fully explain the disorder; therefore the disorder will be harder to treat and understand. All theories have advantages and disadvantages therefore to take the best of all theories will help to reduce the symptoms and ever cure the disorder. If only one theory was used the individual with the disorder may suffer for a longer time for no apparent reason.

Conclusion

The psychological theories do help to understand the disorders, but just to use and only understand one theory, will have a biased result. As these mental health disorders are complex in their own right, all theories should be indorsed and taken into account when trying to understand, prevent or cure the disorder.

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