

# History of abnormal psychology assignment

[Psychology](#)



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Running Heading: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE Historical Perspectives of  
Abnormal Psychology Psychology 410 Abnormal Psychology 7/29/2010

Throughout the history of human kind there has been a fascination of human behavior, especially behaviors that are considered to be abnormal. Dating back to biblical times the pursuit of clarity and the desire to cure such behaviors has existed. Theories ranging for demonic possession to biological perspective have been considered. This intense research led to the development of the abnormal psychology, which would later blossom into a scientific discipline.

This paper endeavors to examine and illustrate the unique and extensive history of the discipline of psychology that has made such a great impact in the understanding of mental development, cognition deficiency, disorders, and ailments. Origins of Abnormal Psychology The journey of Abnormal Psychology has been ever changing; the growth within this discipline has come an extremely long way. Over the centuries there has been an overwhelming interest of human behavior, especially “ abnormal” behavior.

This intense curiosity evoked a desire to explain and understand such behavior. According to researchers, the exhibit of abnormal human behaviors can be dated back before Biblical history (Damour & Hansell, 2008). Such findings can be proven by the writings of early Egyptian writings, as well as the examination of early human skulls. The results of these studies revealed the presences of rituals that were performed with the intentions of ridding the individual from their abnormal behavior.

A technique used during the ritual was cutting a hole into the forehead of the individual, in order to release the evil spirits or demons that were believed to be controlling the mind and behavior of the individual. This method is known as trephining- releasing, which is the releasing of mind and body controlling demons by using a trephine to cut a hole in the skull. Other methods previously used were exorcism and frontal lobotomies. Exorcism is the driving out of demonic spirits by way of prayer, fasting, or magical practices; and lobotomy is the cutting of the frontal lobe, which altered behavior and damaged the frontal area of the brain. During early history there has been a back and forth belief of the cause of mental abnormalities, between spiritual and biological. The earliest the biological cause of abnormalities can be seen is 460 B. C. by Hippocrates who introduced an absolute biological account of abnormal behavior. According to his position, if there is an imbalance of four vital fluids the development of mental illness occurs, which are phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile.

This position was a scientific evolution, though this theory was flawed, and it elucidates abnormalities from a completely physical aspect. This perspective was the foundation of the scientific discipline of which psychopathology was built upon and through this aspect was true clarity of abnormality discovered. Evolution of Abnormal Psychology into a Scientific Discipline Ancient Greeks offered a more biological explanation of abnormal behaviors, with the use of terminology such as anxiety and hysteria. They not only diagnosed symptoms of hysteria, but they prescribed a course of treatment as well.

Because it tends to impact the female demographic and alter the physical body, Greek physicians were led to believe that the uterus flooded about the body causing blockage of the vital fluids aforementioned. By 1896 Sigmund Freud introduced a systematic theory of psychodynamics, which gave a psychological explanation of hysteria (Damour & Hansell, 2008; History of psychology, 2010). With Freud's studies, which were primarily based upon case studies, he presented an explanation for the mysterious manifestations associated with hysteria.

This was made possible through Freud's theory of the conflicts shared between the conscious and subconscious actions. Though the psychodynamic perspective lacked evidence of scientific perspective, the discipline of abnormal psychology obtained its first theory of psychopathology; due to the discoveries of Freud's studies. In 1879 Wilhelm Wundt assembled the first psychological laboratory, opening the door for scientific explanation for the origination of psychological disorders. Following this event, G.

Stanley Hall organized the American Psychology Association in 1892. Later in 1952 APA would release the first mental disorders diagnostic manual (Anthony ; Goldstein, 1988). This manual assisted researchers and clinicians with the diagnostic criteria and categories of mental illness and disorders. By 1892 the University of Pennsylvania became the first operational psychology clinic for patients. Through the development of all the aforementioned components, the discipline of abnormal psychology was transcended into a scientific one.

## The Psychosocial, Biological/Medical, and Sociocultural Theoretical Models

**Psychosocial Model** The theory of psychosocial development addresses the perception of individuals and its impact on their behavior with environment factors. Erik Erikson was one of the first supporters of psychosocial development theory. Erikson's eight stages of development theory suggested the completion of each stage is a necessity for healthy development. According to Erikson, the failure to master each stage has the potential to lead to dysfunction of development.

Due to the nature of Erikson's theory, where the advancement to the following stage is contingent upon the mastering of the previous one; it introduces issues for the field of abnormal psychology (Studer, 2006). For instance, if advancement does not occur without mastery, following stages are not addressed and the threat of mental illness takes place. In addition, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual's 4th axis is dedicated to the environment problem and psychosocial relationship to mental illness.

In other words, the correlation of abnormal psychology and psychosocial model relates to Erickson's theory of psychosocial development and the DSM-IV. **Biological/Medical Model** The biological /medical aspect focuses on the bio-chemical functionality of the brain, as well as the physiological operation of the human body. This entails disease, hormone imbalances, neurochemical disturbances, and genetic abnormalities. In this model an attempt to explain in material terms the operation of abnormal psychology, is by closely examining the physical attributes of the human psyche.

Although this model is primarily immersed with the corporeal aspect, a social component has relevant correlation to biological operations as well; thus constricting the clarification of abnormal behavior. This limitation is caused by the extensive role social factors play on the physical aspect. Sociocultural Model The model of sociocultural perspective examines and analyzes the cultural and social aspect of abnormal behavior and its influence on human functionality (Damour ; Hansell, 2008, p. 63). For instance the impact of racial adversity, economic status, and employment status has one specific behavior such as criminal behavior.

Furthermore, social and cultural elements are also considered in the perspective of the sociocultural model in reference to their level of responsibility in human learning, component such as ideals, stresses, cultural pressures, etc. The perfect example is the burden of caring for an elderly parent. Statistics illustrates the likelihood of this responsibility being absorbed by the adult children and is based on certain historical components; for example, upbringing, socio-economics, and race (Aziz, Bellack ; Rosenfarb, 2006).

Conclusion Finally, the contributions of spiritual elucidation; Hippocrates' ill-advised biological deduction; Freud's fixation on the ambiguity of hysteria-compiling an interpretation of psychopathology, presenting the belief that conflict between the conscious and unconscious mind leading to mental ailments; along with the other aforementioned contributions shared in the creating of the foundation of a field of psychology that have made such an impact in gaining clarity, proper management and diagnosing of mental abnormalities.

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