

Summaries of articles book review sample

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drugs](#)



Summaries of Articles

Tutorial Two

Introduction

One of the landmarks of the 20th century was the unprecedented growth in the field of Psychology. However, some pertinent issues (which remain unresolved) threaten the credibility of this noble profession. For example, there is little data to support the classification of “ mental illnesses” and use of drugs to treat nonmedical conditions.

Article Summary

Psychology and the Status Quo by Isaac Prilleltensky

Prilleltensky (1989) argues that the rise of Psychology has been immune to skeptical ideology. In some way, Psychologists learn not deviate from contemporary ideology. As a result, no questions have been raised about some of its social beliefs. Consequently, works carried out in the name of psychological science have been used to rationalize social policies, which do not promote human welfare. A compelling example is the belief that human beings are either adaptive or maladaptive. This led to the birth of eugenics movement, and broad discrimination of people on social, ethical and racial basis followed.

Integrating Critical psychiatry into Psychiatric Training by Duncan Double

According to Double (2001), contemporary Psychiatry suppresses orthodox alternatives to treating mental disorders. Double also points out some rifts in the present-day Psychiatry that remain unresolved. For example, questions

have been raised regarding the efficacy of clinical trials carried out on tricyclic antidepressants and the effectiveness of lithium compounds used in treating maniac patients. The author also raises fears about the validity of psychiatric diagnosis. The use of manuals such as the DSM-IV does not in the first place solve the dilemma on psychiatric classification (Double, 2001). Lastly, Double raises concerns about the training of medical students. Under the current system, students cannot explain the mechanism underlying the pathologies they encounter in practice.

Shaping the Intimate: Influences on the Experiences of Everyday Nerves by David Healy

The author highlights some gimmicks used (by pharmaceutical companies) to influence the opinion of clinicians, and the public. Healy links the increased cases of panic disorder to the marketing of Xanax by Upjohn Company. Xanax was widely publicized as a remedy for panic disorder. The marketing gimmicks used by pharmaceutical companies led to a rise in the use antidepressants in the 90s in countries like the US, Japan and UK (Healy, 2004). Pharmaceutical companies also use ghostwriters to author papers, and then go ahead to use names of “celebrity” researchers as the original authors. The idea is to “medicalize” marketing data obtained in clinical trials. It is a commonplace for such companies to line up “experts” to counter negative publicity about their products.

The Myth of Mental Illness by Thomas Szasz

In this article, Szasz argues that the use of the term “mental illnesses” is misleading because it indicates brain sicknesses. However, most of the “mental illnesses” arise due to peculiarities in thinking and behavior (Szasz,

1960). Therefore, it is a fallacy to use medication to treat conditions that arise on nonmedical grounds. Szasz also faults the system used to diagnose “ mental illnesses”. He argues that the use of psychiatrists to determine the precise “ mental illness” is deceitful since it is not clear whose interests the client is serving.

Personal Reflection

Psychology should be based on evidence; therefore, it is vital for psychologists to refer clients to treatment methods that can be supported with facts. Unless, there is a deliberate effort to change the status quo, the future of Psychology is in jeopardy.

Tutorial Three

Introduction

The classification of mental disorders in the DSM manual is a controversial subject that cannot be dismissed easily. To some scientists, the DSM manual is “ a political document” because it lacks enough data to support categorization of mental disorders. Sensing this confusion, pharmaceutical companies have seized the opportunity to market their drugs. Apart from the DSM blunder, psychology has for a long time been used to support the perspective of “ gendered roles” without enough support leading to alpha and beta biases.

DSM III and the Politics of Truth by Thomas E Schacht

Schacht (1985) argues that DSM is a political tool used (by health professionals) to gain and control social power. DSM is an attempt to increase acceptance of certain values and beliefs. The document validates

and reinforces imaginary mechanisms used to draw conclusions about people. It also controls how clients and professionals access psychological resources. Although, it is in the public domain, clients cannot use the manual without consulting a psychologist for assessment. Besides, the choice of words in the manual is careless and lacks scientific pattern.

Diagnosis by Mary Boyle

Psychiatry is a branch of medicine, a science which requires the use of evidence to support claims. Boyle takes issue with the classification of mental disorders in the DSM manual. There is no meaningful pattern in the diagnosis criteria (Boyle, 1999). Moreover, the clusters lack statistical evidence to prove that the diagnoses are grouped in a meaningful way. The clusters also lack biological or psychological explanations to support signs and symptoms. In order to camouflage these errors, DSM is taking false measures to show progress.

The Bio-Bio-Bio Model of Madness

The flawed classification of mental disorders has given pharmaceutical companies the leeway to dominate psychiatry. For a number of years now, mental disorders have been overmedicated. Many people resort to the use of quick-fix pills instead of exploring safe and effective alternatives such as psychotherapy. Ironically, psychotherapy can be effective when used alone, or in combination with drugs. The author gives an example of schizophrenia—a condition whose symptoms are not a sign of medical illness. Most people mention poverty and a difficult childhood more than the biogenic factors. The use of drugs does not solve the social and psychological issues underlying

schizophrenia. Therefore, the argument that social stressors trigger genetic factors responsible for schizophrenia cannot be further from the truth.

The Meaning of Difference: Gender Theory, Postmodernism and Psychology by Rachael Hare-Mustin and Jeanne Marecek

In contemporary psychology, there is an exaggeration of gender differences. In most cases, psychologists commit alpha and beta biases. Beta bias minimizes the gender differences while alpha biases maximize the differences. From the ancient times, Psychology has portrayed women as the weak sex. For example, Parson's sex role theory casts the perspective that men are better at some roles than women. Parson theory argues that men fit well working in offices while women fit well in supporting men.

Major Depressive Disorder in a Community-Based Twin Sample by Bierut et al

A study carried out by Bierut et al (1999) revealed that women are more prone to major depressive disorder than men. The study supports Parsons Theory that women are emotional beings. However, the study does not delve deeper to explain the possible reasons for this difference.

Reflection

Although critics raise pertinent points on the classification of mental disorders, the DSM manual is by far the single most influential document which attempts to diagnose various mental disorders. Diagnosis is still vital in Psychology because it gives a psychologist a guide to advise the client on the way forward.

Tutorial four

Introduction

The infiltration of pharmaceuticals companies into the field of psychiatry is terrible news. Credible research shows that use of psychoactive drugs to alleviate mental disorders is responsible for a number of side-effects.

However, psychologists and the public continue to use psychoactive drugs instead of exploring safe and effective means to treat mental disorders.

Hearing Voices and the Politics of Oppression by Ron Coleman

Although some people believe that Schizophrenia is a disease of the central nervous system, caused by genetic malfunctions, this is not true (Coleman, 2000). In most cases, the use of dopamine is used to control Schizophrenia, but the role of dopamine in alleviating Schizophrenia has been exaggerated.

There is no evidence to support the role of dopamine in realigning the “chemical imbalances”. Proponents of the “chemical imbalances” perspective fail to think about the possibility life events such as trauma and other environmental factors in causing Schizophrenia. Psychiatrists recommending dopamine to their clients do not reveal the potential side effects. Some of the side-effects include dry mouth and difficulties in urination.

Living in Britain: prescribed to infants, children and teenagers in the UK? By Steve Baldwin

Currently, there is no data to prove that ADHD is a result of brain pathology (Baldwin, 2000). However, the use of psychoactive drugs such as the MPH is rampant in the UK. False reports purporting that amphetamine prescription is sufficient, even without psychological intervention, have helped to push the

sale of this drugs. It is fascinating to note that amphetamine is a controlled substance, whose use prescription in adults was cut-off because it is addictive, toxic and prone to misuse. Despite this fact, companies and psychiatrists market the drug to children of 3-17 years, an age prone to CNS disorders due to use of psychostimulants. Moreover, amphetamine has other side effects such as liver abnormalities and cardiovascular effects.

Pharmacology and Human Values by Peter Breggin

There overreliance on psychiatric drugs can be attributed to the failure to explore safe and effective psychotherapeutic alternatives (Breggin P. R., 2003). People do not trust therapy and overstate the importance of medication in relieving their suffering. They do not believe that they are safe without using drugs. However, no one is making an effort to evaluate how the drugs affect our abilities. Apart from causing side-effects, antidepressants undermine the capacity of children to learn how to control themselves. The problem is that no one is trying the use of humanistic-existential approach to treat mental disorders. Humans have unique capacities, feelings and aspirations; the best means to help them is to promote self-understanding and enriching people's lives.

Should the Use of neuroleptics be severely limited? By Peter Breggin

There are misleading claims that neuroleptics have an anti-psychotic effect on Schizophrenia, and returns people to normalcy (Breggin P. , 1994). However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that neuroleptics have a specific effect on psychotic problems. The reality is that neuroleptics lead to irreversible, untreatable disorders. The use of neuroleptics leads to tardive

Dyskinesia which affects millions of people in the world; children are extremely prone to this condition.

Reflection

It is vital for psychologists to note that drugs come second to therapy when treating mental disorders, and not vice versa. Psychologists should also warn their clients against the psychoactive use of drugs found to have side-effects. Also, it is morally wrong to encourage the use of psychoactive drugs when there are safe and effective alternatives.

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Introduction

Inclusion of sexual behaviors, which deviate from society norms, in the DSM manual is a raging debate which will not end any time soon. Labeling deviant behavior as a mental disorder defies ethical motives, and can be seen as an attempt to stigmatize certain groups. The fact that those who authored the DSM manual bowed down to pressure and expunged homosexuality from the list of disorders should be a reminder that psychiatrists have no business in controlling societal norms.

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It is very unfortunate for the psychiatrists to label some people who deviate from societal norms as mad (Lev, 2006). Although proponents of Gender Identity Disorder diagnosis argue that it is vital so that people with the disorder maybe refereed to physicians to prescribe hormones, the purpose and use of the diagnosis is a subject of controversy. It is an attempt to control the society driven (by social biases) to create and maintain such diagnostic categories. Apart from being biased, this category negatively influences social policies and court judgments (Lev, 2006). It also delineates some groups such as people who want to change their gender and does not address the environmental issues driving the behavior.

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Moser and Kleinplatz (2005) argue that the current criterion is not sufficient

to label paraphilia as a mental disease because there is no supporting evidence. Although other deviant sexual behaviors such as masturbation, oral sex, and homosexuality are now considered part of everyday life, paraphilia is still stigmatized due to the inclusion in the DSM manual. The researchers argue that it should be withdrawn, because it serves no useful function in addressing the environmental issues underlying the perpetration of the behavior.

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Shaw and Proctor (2005) maintain that this classification individualizes women and exposes them to unnecessary social stigma. Moreover, there is no concerted effort made to understand cases of sexual abuse and any history of distress- some key pointers to solving this condition. Therefore, this categorization is biased and does not add any substance to the field of psychiatry.

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Wallcraft and Michaelson have come up with an alternative means of dealing with psychological issues that have been neglected for years. Self-advocacy is the best option for biomedical models to illnesses because the mainstream models of psychiatry have failed (Wallcraft & Michaelson, 2000). Therefore, there is a need to re-orient policy towards self-advocacy. This can be facilitated through recounting history and developing a self-assessment schedule. Apart, from helping to reduce social stigma, self-advocacy can help patients actualize themselves.

Reflection

This is the right time to adopt innovative means when dealing with mental disorders because the contemporary means have not been useful in improving human welfare. Educating the public can be the first step in

overhauling the contemporary psychology. Unless something is done, we will still go back to using systems that have proved to be ineffective.

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