

Psychopathology can
be defined as the
study of mental
distress



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maladaptive abnormal behavior. Psychopathology is the term that is most commonly used in the field of psychiatry in which pathology is known as disease processes. In the non-medical field of psychology, abnormal psychology is another term that is similar to psychopathology and that is used more frequently. Davison (2005) defines Abnormal psychology as a branch of psychology that deals with the study of unusual patterns of emotion, thought and behavior, which may or may not be recognized as an abruptly cause of a mental disorder. There is an extensive history of efforts to understand and control the behavior that has been seen defiant or aberrant, either morally or statistically. It has been seen that there is always cultural fluctuation in the approach employed (Hansell & Lisa, 2005).

Abnormal psychology distinguishes multiple various causes for various conditions, applying varied theories from the common field of psychology and much still depends upon what incisively is meant by the term abnormal. Traditionally, there has been a divide between biological and psychological explanations, which reflects a philosophical dualism concerning the mind body problem and various approaches to the categorization of mental disorders (Davison, 2005). Abnormal psychology is a very significant branch of psychology and therefore should be discussed in terms of its origins, how it has evolved into a scientific discipline, and its theoretical interpretations and viewpoints of psychosocial, socio-cultural, and biological models should be assessed.

It has been seen that abnormal behavior and states vary from individual to individual and from culture to culture. Abnormal psychology involves the study of individuals who cannot function and adapt normally under

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conditions that are conceived as normal and these behaviors usually come to being due to social interactions, genetics, physical conditioning, reasoning and learning. As the origins of abnormal psychology are examined, one will see that for a number of years many people have been attempting to understand and alter what is believed as abnormal behavior. Most people believed that abnormal behavior was as a result of three major reasons including biological psychosocial and supernatural. When an individual displayed an abnormal behavior, it was perceived to be as a result of spirits, demons, astral influences and planetary influences (Davison, 2005). In the period of Stone Age, when an individual exhibited abnormal behavior, it was believed that they can be treated by drilling a hole into the head so that to let the evil spirit to escape (Getzfeld, 2006).

In ancient Egyptian, Hebrew and Chinese cultures, it was believed to be a punishment from God, as He sent the evil demons, and the individual who constantly have to go through an exorcism to do away with the evil demons. In the period of Grecian and Roman Empires, during the 19th century, it was believed that abnormal behavior was as a result of imbalance of four humors which could be treated by withdrawing fluids from the brain. The four humors form the foundation of ancient medicine and they consist of phlegm, yellow bile, black bile, and blood. It was believed that if any of the four fluids was more than its normal amount in the body, a certain temperament corresponding to the excess fluid could be displayed by the patient. A patient with large quantity of blood was seen so cheerful, perhaps with a lot of energy. An excess of phlegm made the patient apathetic and cool. A large quantity of black bile made an individual depressive or melancholic. Finally,

a large quantity of yellow bile made an individual to possess an easily angered temperament (Grafton, Most & Settis, 2010).

During the Dark Ages, the Europeans believed that mental disorders were as a result of evil spirits that owned the individual and the only way to get rid of the situation was by religious exorcism. In case religious exorcism -failed, the individual was confined and tortured for the evil spirit to leave the body. The belief continued to take place until the 15th century. During the 16th century, a Swiss astrologer, physician and alchemist by the name Paracelsus thought that mental disorders were as a result of movements of stars and the moon as well as due to evil spirits and demons. The Greek physician by the name Hippocrates believed that abnormal behaviors were due to biological means. He thought that any abnormal behavior could be treated just like any other sickness and the brain was the root cause of the abnormal behaviors since it is responsible for intelligence, wisdom, emotions and consciousness. Abnormal behaviors due to social cause were seen as a problem in psychological development as well as social reasons (Getzfeld, 2006).

Hospitals began to emerge through the Middle Ages and this was the first time when hospitals started to be used for people with mental disorders. During this time, deviant behavior was believed to be due to good versus evil within an individual which was thought to be God versus Satan respectively. Elimination of evil or demons would often bring about permanent disability or even death and this is among the reasons to why hospitals emerged. The science of Abnormal psychology came into existence during the Renaissance era. Johann Weyer is known as the first doctor who specialized in the study of <https://assignbuster.com/psychopathology-can-be-defined-as-the-study-of-mental-distress/>

mental disorders and mental illness and was the founder of psychopathology. It was unfortunate that during this era asylums started to replace hospitals but it would change through the French Revolution era. William Tuke, Dorothea Dix, and Phillipe Pinet thought that human beings always required care and kindness. The three individuals acted as agents in reforming the thinking of society and started establishing more hospitals for people with mental disorders and mental illnesses. What was once seen as demons and resolved with drilling holes into the head, evolved into humane care and kindness of people with mental illness (Davison, 2005).

Theoretical Viewpoints and Interpretations of Biological Models

It is true that throughout history, the abnormal behavior has been faulted on various causes. One of the causes of mental illness has been attributed to the individual. The biological model centers on the individual and some of the body parts that might bring about mental illnesses. In the biological model, brain and its functions are the primary focus. Mental disorders and mental illnesses were thought to result due to genetics, viral infections, brain injury, and poor nutrition (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). Imbalances of neurotransmitters formed the primary focus in the brain.

Theoretical Viewpoints and Interpretations of Socio-cultural Models

Socio-cultural model is different from the biological model in that socio-cultural model centers on both the environment and the society of the individual with mental illness. Socio-cultural theorists focus on religion, family, communication, cultural background, and social networks. The

individual is not seen as the one causing the problem but it is the
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environment in which the individual is born or placed that can bring about mental illness. Where the individual is brought up either urban or rural development has been considered to be of immense significance. Minority and gender status of the individual qualifies to be other important considerations for socio-cultural model (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2007).

Theoretical Viewpoints and Interpretations of Psychosocial Models

In some terms, the psychosocial model incorporates both the socio-cultural and biological models together. The psychosocial model does not just look at the hormones, brain, or the environment but it looks at the unconscious of the individual as well as the type of relationships the person has formed over his or her lifetime. Psychodynamic theory forms the foundation of the psychosocial model and Sigmund Freud is the infamous theorist who is behind this theory. Freud looked at the relationship between daughter or son and mother. He reasoned that this relationship was the most significant and could influence the mental status of an individual. Some of the most significant aspects the theorists of psychosocial model look at are social deprivation, parenting styles, emotional trauma, peer relationships, and marital discord and divorce (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2007).

Conclusion

Psychopathology and abnormal psychology have experienced extreme changes right from the earliest time during when it was believed that demons and evil was the cause of abnormal behavior and that the cure was to drill a hole into the head to release the demons, to modern day when science and technology of research, medication, and hospitalization of many <https://assignbuster.com/psychopathology-can-be-defined-as-the-study-of-mental-distress/>

people with mental illness. It has been found that various theorists have different ideas regarding the causes of abnormal behaviors, for instance the biology of hormones and the brain, the cultural and environmental afflictions of the person, or the unconscious forces of early relationships and development over the individual's lifetime.