PSYCHIATRY

Greek: Psyche (soul) iatros (doctor)

- Deals with the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders ie conditions that affect one or more of
  - Mood/feelings
  - Thinking
  - Perceptions
  - Behaviour
  - Memory and other cognitive functions

- A relatively new medical speciality compared with surgery or medicine,

- Scientific basis of psychiatry still in its infancy – because the brain (particularly the systems involved in the above list) is hard to study - renal (kidney) medicine is more straight forward.

SOME FOUNDING FATHERS

Sigmund Freud- psychoanalyst
Emile Kraepelin – differentiated manic depressive psychosis(bipolar disorder) from dementia praecox(schizophrenia)
Julius Wagner Jauregg- only psychiatric nobel prize winner- showed syphilis caused insanity
Jean Delay- worked on initial trials of an antipsychotic drug for schizophrenia

WANTED

Bright young things who……..

- are interested in people
- like thinking about ethics
- will champion society’s underdogs
- can cope with uncertainty
- will not tolerate discrimination
- like working in multidisciplinary teams
DISORDERS OF THE MIND

These can be primarily:-

1 **Neurotic**

- Where the symptoms are different from normal experiences only in degree /quantity - eg anxiety, phobias, obsessionality, depression,
- the sufferer retains awareness (insight) into their abnormal symptoms

2 **Psychotic**

Here there are no normal equivalent experiences which occur in clear consciousness and the sufferer lacks awareness eg schizophrenia, bipolar disorder. Main examples = hallucinations - perception without a stimulus “I hear a man and woman discussing my actions”

Delusions - fixed false belief out of keeping with cultural norms - A vicar in Guildford believes he has a voodoo spell on him (Someone from Haiti believing the same may not be deluded)

3 **Organic**

The symptoms are due to a degenerative brain disorder (Dementias, Huntingdon’s disease) or a ‘Medical’ condition (eg urinary infection causing delirium) - confusion/amnesia

4 **Personality Disorders**

- In which there is an imbalance of the traits of personality eg impulsive, emotionally unstable, lacking empathy, aggression etc.
- A controversial area especially the treatability of severely dangerous individuals.

**Importance of Psychiatric Disorders**

- All Illnesses – One in four. (Life time prevalence)
- Depression 15% - third most economically important illness.
- Schizophrenic 0.5%
- Bipolar disorder 0.5%
- Dementia – about 0.8 million sufferers in the UK

25% GP consultations have a significant mental health component.

60%+ General Hospital patients are over 65. 50% of whom have a mental disorder.

**Mental disorders affect general health eg:**

- Increased risk of cardiovascular disease
- Poorer recovery from physical illness

and they may become chronic – therefore disabling and blighting the life of the sufferer.

I consider it a real privilege to work with the elderly - they are living witnesses to modern history. So many memorable stories - the old lady who, as a young mother, had 4 children no indoor loo, no disposable nappies, no washing machine or microwave. The old boy who once ducked and dived under German machine gun fire on a Normandy beach. How did they cope?

*Old age psychiatrist*
MENTAL HEALTH ACT

A patient must give their consent before a Doctor can treat them. The exception to this is in the case of a patient suffering from mental illness where:

a) The illness is of sufficient severity

b) The patient is at risk of harming themselves or others

If a) and b) apply, then the patient can be detained under the Mental Health Act following an assessment by two Doctors and an Approved Mental Health Professional (usually a Social Worker)

“…….But the real pleasure and challenge in psychiatry is engaging with people who don’t always want to talk, untangle what is often unintelligible, in environments no one else you know ever sets foot - (squats, prisons, Occupy Bristol camp, skips....) ……”

Consultant psychiatrist, Bristol

TREATMENT APPROACHES

1. Medical

a) Antidepressants – eg Prozac
b) Antipsychotics eg Haloperidol
c) Mood stabilisers eg Lithium…..in bipolar disorder
d) Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)…..in severe depression/mania

2. Psychological (Talking therapy)

To help the patient see things in a different way and to manage certain symptoms (particularly anxiety and depression) in a better way. Many different types of therapy C.B.T (cognitive behavioural therapy) the commonest N.H.S. treatment. Psychoanalysis is only available privately.

Psychiatrists ……..as opposed to Psychologists

- Have a medical training
- Makes diagnosis
- Considers overlap with general medical disorders
- Can prescribed medication
- Can detain a patient under the Mental Health Act
Models of mental illness: extreme ends of the debate

**Biological model** - it’s all bad genes and over/underactive neurotransmitters, drug abuse, head injury, birth complications, viruses

Eg- Serotonin deficiency and depression
Dopamine overactivity-and schizophrenia

Psychosocial model- it’s all social deprivation, adverse childhood experiences, trauma, maternal deprivation, unemployment, bereavement, difficult relationships, stressful life events

…actually it’s a bit of this and a bit of that i.e. multifactorial

**CHALLENGES**

- Stigma/Discrimination/inaccurate portrayal
- Underfunding of Services
- Lack of Awareness – patients and doctor
- Attracting staff to a speciality not seen as glamorous
- Illnesses are often related to factors beyond the control of doctors – poverty, unemployment, family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse

Demographic time bomb-ageing population
And demands this places on the N.H.S.
Abraham Lincoln - president USA post civil war

Brooke Shields (severe post natal depression- Tom Cruise helpfully suggested that she was suffering from bad Karma in a former life. Thanks Tom. The nobel prize for medicine won’t be coming your way. Ignorant fool!)

Jim Carey - actor

Winston Churchill - hounded by recurrent depression terming it the “black dog”

DEMENTIA

Iris Murdoch
Oxford academic & author

YOU MUST SEE THE FILM “IRIS” – starring Kate Winslett

Ronald Reagan
former US president

Terry Prachett
Author
Deolali – a military station north of Bombay infamous for its dreadful conditions and the frequent madness “campfever” of soldiers gloomily awaiting repatriation. Corrupted to “going Doolaly”

“Mad as a hatter”- milliners used mercuric compounds which caused a toxic encephalopathy (brain damage)

Lunatic- it was thought that mankind’s many maladies were caused (influenced- hence “Influenza”– from the Italian – i.e Flu) by extra terrestrial bodies. The moon got the blame for mental illness

“Going round the bend”- when the large asylums of the Victorian era were built the approach to the entrance had a bend (instead of the usual straight tree line promenade). This was to allow the miserable wretches entering quickly to disappear from view.

Batty/Bats in the belfry - the belfry (top of the tower) being a metaphor for the mind whilst the frantic seemingly chaotic movement of bats living there in being the unhinged thoughts of the insane
There are few famous people with this dreadful condition because it strikes before people can achieve their potential. However, the sons of two Nobel Prize-winning scientists—Einstein & Watson (structure of DNA)—suffered from it. Perhaps some of the genes involved are associated with capacity to think laterally/imaginatively.

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**Schizophrenia**
- John Nash, Mathematician
- Syd Barrett, founder of Pink Floyd—oh! Just ask your parents!
- Louis Wain, artist

Some authorities think that his bouts of mental illness were due to a biochemical illness, called porphyria—think it was bipolar disorder—but what do I know!

**Onset during 2/3 decade of hallucinations ("voices"), delusions/false beliefs), thought disorder. Usually a chronic life-long disorder. May destroy life**

**Bipolar disorder**
- King George Third
- Stephen Fry, founder of Pink Floyd—oh! Just ask your parents!
- Vincent Van Gogh

The madness of King George—another "must see film". Some authorities think that his bouts of mental illness were due to a biochemical illness, called porphyria—think it was bipolar disorder—but what do I know!

-again, onset in early adulthood of bouts of severe depression and of mania (sort of the opposite—euphoria, overactivity, sleeplessness, grandiosity, plans+++ and psychosis) which tend to get more severe with age

Other sufferers—Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway,
BACKGROUND READING

Bad Science - Bed Goldacre
Psychiatry in dissent - Anthony Clare
The Mind a Users Guide - Raj Persaud
Causing deaths and Saving lives - Jonathan Glover

A Very Short Introduction
To the Brain
To Medical Ethics
To Schizophrenia
(all by oxford university press)

A brief history of madness - Roy Porter
The brain: a beginners guide - Ammar Chalabri
The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat - Oliver Sacks

Anything by Susan Greenfield (neuropharmacologist)

Keep an Eye on:-

- Medical pages of broadsheets/Newspapers
- BBC Health website to see what is current, controversial, in the news
- Royal college of psychiatrists –website- lots of info sheets on home page

MUST SEE FILMS

Birdy - post traumatic distress disorder in Vietnam veteran who thinks that he is a bird

Madness of King George - true story of King George 3rd who developed manic like episode

Iris - Iris Murdoch, scholar/writer who developed Alzheimer’s disease

A beautiful mind John Nash, mathematician who has schizophrenia

An Angel at the table – story of young woman who developed schizophrenia

Her name is Sabine- moving documentary by French actress whose sister is autistic

Sicko – by Michael Moore – an expose of the USA health system

SOME MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH A PSYCHIATRIC SLANT

- What is the difference between empathy and sympathy
- Should Doctors be involved in assisted suicide
- If you had £20 million to spend on the NHS, how would you use it
- What is the most important personal quality that a Doctor should have? (-imperturbability?)
- Why this medical school
- Why do you want to be a doctor – as opposed to a nurse?
- What has been the most significant medical innovation in the last 100 years? (- public health improvements?)

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