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Psychology Study Material: Perspective, Model, Approach, Biological and Medical Perspective

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Perspective/Model/Approach

- A paradigm in psychology is a distinct way of describing, observing, understanding, and predicting any given psychological phenomena. The professionals, as well as students, in order to conceptualize and organize the available information, need a model or paradigm. Also, it is required because it is used to test hypotheses and for conducting research work in order to testify the validity of assumptions.
- Includes assumptions about what drives human behaviour, how disorders develop, and treatment prescriptions

Biological/Medical Perspective

Based on the assumption of Materialism i.e., all behaviour has a physiological basis

- An understanding of biochemical processes will give an understanding of psychological and social phenomena
- Physical structures and hereditary processes determine behaviour or behaviour potential
- Physical/physiological interventions can alter mental processes and behaviour
- Root cause of abnormalities and disorders lies in biology and requires medical intervention

Historical Background

The historical roots of biological model are very old, dating back to at least the time of Hippocrates. There are a number of great names that contributed to this approach, of which the more important ones will be discussed.

Hippocrates (460 - 377 B. C)

- Greek physician/philosopher
- Regarded as the “Father of Medicine”
- Talked about basis for medical problems

- Believed that rational knowledge could serve a path for understanding psychological problems.

Galen (129 - 199 a. D)

- Born to Greek parents in Asia Minor
- Great physician with an empirical approach who rejected the old doctrine and relied on his observation and research.
- Correctly identified various parts of the nervous system and had an accurate grasp of how nervous system functions.
- Known for anatomical studies on animals and observations of human body functions

Charles Darwin: (1809 - 1882 Ad)

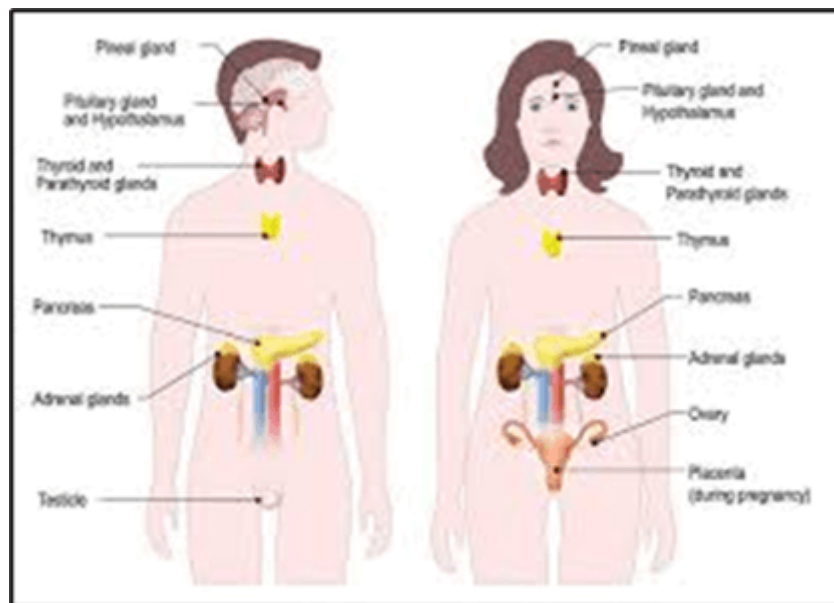
- British scientist
- Author of the revolutionary “The Origin of Species” (1859)
- According to Darwin, variations among individuals of a species would occur by chance, but could in turn be passed on to the future generations
- Gave the concept of “Survival of the Fittest” ; only those variations which helped the individuals survive long enough to breed would sustain and be passed on.

Neurotransmitters

The synapse of the neuron releases special chemicals called “Neurotransmitters”

- Existence of neurotransmitters has been known since 1920’s; but the evidence of their relationship with psychological disorders has been found and known since 1950s
- More than 50 neurotransmitters exist in human body
- Neurotransmitters and Their Role
- Acetylcholine: Learning, Memory and Muscle control
- Dopamine: Motor activity, Coordination, Emotion and Memory
- Epinephrine: Emotion, Stress
- GABA (Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid) : Anxiety, Arousal, Learning
- Serotonin: Sensory Processing, Sleep, Arousal
- Glutamate: Anxiety, Mood

Endocrine Glands



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These glands form the body's "slow" chemical communication system; a set of ductless glands that secrete hormones (special chemicals) into the bloodstream

Endocrine Glands and Abnormality

- Low secretions of the thyroid produce anxiety like symptoms such as irritability and tension
- Low level of pituitary secretions produces depression like symptoms — Fatigue, apathy etc.
- Abnormal secretions of hormones may cause major depression
- Assumptions of Biological/Medical Model
- Abnormality is caused by some disease in the "Central Nervous System" (C. N. S) .
- Disease in the C. N. S. has some biological or physical origin.
- Physicians are best able to treat diseases of the C. N. S.
- Diseases in the C. N. S. are not currently specific.

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