

## Compare and contrast biological and psychological explanations of schizophrenia

Both the biological and the psychological explanations of schizophrenia are supported by empirical evidence which justify their explanations. However, within the biological explanation there is the genetic explanation which is used largely based on scientific research such as that of Gottesman's research using meta-analysis which looked at the family (including twin) relationships and concordance rates of schizophrenia. The studies used Gottesman's research was scientifically based and because of the large number of studies and therefore the sample used, the biological research can be credited for being representative. However, research into the psychological explanation such as the family theory and the Schizophrenogenic Mother is based on uncontrolled clinical observations as is the double bind communication. This suggests the possibility of researcher bias and no firm cause and effect conclusions can be made. Critics would therefore argue that the biological explanation has much more credibility where research evidence is concerned than the psychological model. Due to the size and nature of the research.

Although research in the biological explanation was scientifically based it was not laboratory based. As there was no manipulation of the IV or DV neither the biological or the psychological can make a firm cause and effect conclusion as to the causes or explanations of schizophrenia. For example we can not confirm that the enlarged brain ventricles are not the result of schizophrenia and not the cause. Likewise we can not say for sure that a Schizophrenogenic mother isn't the result of having a schizophrenic child and not the cause of schizophrenia in the child.

Both the psychological and biological explanation of schizophrenia are criticised for being too simplistic an explanation of the causes of schizophrenia. However, both theories are not rigid in their views and most scientists believe that is a complex interaction between biological and environmental factors which determine the development of schizophrenia. Although most supporters of the genetic explanation believe that there is a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia and therefore accept other psychological and environmental factors. Despite the fact that the Schizophrenogenic Mother explanation does tend to ignore other contributing factors, the overall explanation is not as dogmatic in its view. Both theories do show though that not all of the children in the study meet their hypothesis and develop schizophrenia, this suggests widespread individual differences and suggests that schizophrenia is a very complex disorder and no explanation can account for everything.

The psychological explanation can be criticised for placing direct blame on a specific member of the family, for example the Schizophrenogenic Mother theory places direct blame on the mother. The biological explanation sees schizophrenia as an actual illness and therefore no blame is placed. This links to the argument that the psychological explanation is outdated. The biological explanation is quite

a recent development and is widely supported by most psychologists as at the least having an influence on the causes of schizophrenia. Whereas the psychological explanations such as the Schizophrenogenic Mother theory has been disputed by most psychologists now who can not find any research to support such claims. Critics argue that aspects of the psychological explanation at best reflects the thoughts of the 50's and 60's. The psychological explanation is also no longer accepted as it is seen as an oversimplified explanation of too much of a complex disorder such as schizophrenia. Whereas, the biological explanation although gives a fuller explanation of schizophrenia, it can not account for all cases, however as the explanation is based on a wider more diverse methodology, such as gene mapping and PET scans, it has more credibility compared to the psychological explanation which is based largely upon clinical case-studies.