

## **Describe and evaluate two possible causes of Schizophrenia and two treatments**

This essay will be evaluating two possible causes of schizophrenia and two treatments. Schizophrenia is one of the psychoses. The term covers a whole range of mental disorder, including thought disorder, where language and thinking are grossly disturbed; delusions, for example that some external force ('God', 'the government' etc.) is directing the person's behaviour; and hallucinations, where imaginary voices and figures are heard and seen.

Most experts now believe that schizophrenia is caused by biological and environmental factors. The biological factor coming from a predisposition in the brain, that is most likely inherited from certain genes. This predisposition can happen from as early as when a child is in the womb. Environmental stressors can lead to subtle alterations in the brain, which can make a person more susceptible to schizophrenia. Environmental stressors in early childhood can further damage the brain increasing the risk of schizophrenia. Environmental stressors for example, social stress, isolation during childhood and drug abuse can act as a catalyst for schizophrenia. Experts are now saying schizophrenia and other mental illness is caused by a combination of biological, psychological and social factors.

Research has also proven that a young child and teens brains are more sensitive to stress than an adult would be. Figures show that a child or teens brain is 5-10 times more sensitive to stress than an adult brain would be to stress. What seems like mild to moderate stress for an adult may be very severe stress for a child. This stress-related brain damage can greatly increase risk for many types of mental illness later in life.

Looking deeper into the causes of schizophrenia, it is safe to say that genes do play a part in the illness. If you have a relative with a history of mental illness (for example, bipolar disorder, depression, schizoaffective disorder etc.) you significantly stand a higher chance of getting schizophrenia than most people. It has also been studied that certain genes do not 'turn on' without environmental influences. A gene contributes 0% of what you become if you don't grow up in an environment that turns it on, and environment contributes 0% if you lack the gene it acts on. But if both the gene and the environment that turns it on are present, then it's as if each contributes 100%. This can somewhat explain how genes can play a part in schizophrenia.

To elaborate further on the causes of schizophrenia, environment is key in the development of schizophrenia. When it comes to defining the word environment in relation to schizophrenia, everything but genes is mentioned. Environment is not necessarily the house you was brought up in or the neighbourhood you grew up in, but the social, nutritional, hormonal and chemical environment in the womb of the mother during pregnancy, up to the social dynamics and stress a person experiences, to street drug use, education, virus exposure, vitamin use, and much, much more.

Scientist studies have revealed that a child born in the winter months (January through March/April, in the Northern hemisphere) have a 10% chance of developing schizophrenia. A person born in an urban environment has a 50% chance of developing schizophrenia. A child born from a mother who has Rubella has about a 500% increased risk of schizophrenia. Other causes of schizophrenia through environmental causes are, bereavement (death of a spouse or close family member), as well as flood, the unwantedness of a child (i.e. if the pregnancy was unexpected and undesired at that time), and maternal depression, can all be considered to be different types of high stress situations for the mother and child.

One treatment for schizophrenia is anti-psychotic drugs. Chlorpromazine acts like a powerful sedative for severely disturbed psychotic patients. The drug reduces the level of activity, stabilize mood and reduce hallucinations and paranoid feelings. The drug has allowed many people suffering from mental illness to live with in a community. The effect of the drug do not last long, and wear off within a few days. The short-term effect of this drug, results in the drug being taken regularly. Most drugs do come with side effects, and chlorpromazine is no exception. Its side effects include blurred vision, fainting fits and a lack of energy.

The use of drugs has revolutionized the way mentally ill patients can be treated. Medical science in relation to treating the mentally ill, mainly schizophrenia has come along way from straight jackets and lobotomies. The drugs have allowed these mentally ill people to interact with other people in communities. The drugs do have side affects, and can become addictive.

Another treatment for schizophrenia is psychoanalytic therapy. Sigmund Freud founded this form of therapy. The therapy involves finding out conflict in the unconscious (as the id and the super ego are in conflict with each other). A lot of talking is involved in this style of therapy. The talking cure as it is otherwise known enables the patient to relax and is prompted to recall any incidents they can from their childhood.

Other methods like hypnosis, interpretation of dreams, analysing slips of the tongue and analysing sense of humour are used. From the methods mentioned a picture could be built of what are significant aspects of traumatic events to make the unconscious conscious to the patient.

Psychoanalytic therapy cannot always be useful as it is questioned why do psychologists try and find the answers in the past when the actual problem might be present in the here and now. In contrast there are no pills involved. People who suffer from depression and low self-esteem can find the therapy rewarding be listened to by a psychoanalyst, or being valued as a member of a transactional analyst group is listening them to.

The dopamine hypothesis of schizophrenia and psychosis originated from observations of the dopamine-blocking actions of early neuroleptic drugs. These results support the dopamine hypothesis, however, only on the assumption that the drugs act by reversing an underlying disease mechanism (or part of it). An alternative explanation is that the drugs work by inducing a state of neurological suppression that reduces the intensity of symptoms. Although stimulant drugs are known to induce episodes of psychosis, the mechanism for stimulant-induced psychosis has not been clarified, and stimulants are known to affect many neurotransmitters other than dopamine. Recent imaging studies suggest that there may be increased dopamine release in response to amphetamine administration compared to controls. Some studies indicate increased uptake of L-dopa in parts of the striatum, but some do not. The potential confounding effects of factors associated with dopamine release—such as movement, arousal, attention, stress, and smoking—have rarely been examined, and prior medication use may also have influenced results in some studies. Comparable research on other psychiatric conditions associated with increased arousal, stress, and physical activity is sparse. Research on dopamine concentrations in postmortem brain tissue, on homovanillic acid concentrations, and on dopamine receptors has been negative or inconclusive. Therefore, the idea that the symptoms of psychosis or schizophrenia are caused by the overactivity of dopamine is not supported by current evidence.

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a912030792~db=all~jumptype=rss>

To conclude I have described and evaluated two causes and two treatments for schizophrenia. I have found out that both forms of therapies have their faults, but they also have their benefits. For schizophrenics who kill, I can feel for them, not compassion but just an understanding that the majority of them do not actually know any better, from what I have studied and have found out. With medical science and therapies advancing everyday, we might hope that one day we find a way we can help schizophrenics a lot more than we already do.

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