

Critically assess the biomedical model

The biomedical model of medicine, has been around since the mid-nineteenth century as the predominant model used by physicians in the diagnosis of disease.

However the biomedical model explains disease through only physical factors & doesn't take into account the social factors that some sociologists believe have large impacts on health. The model also overlooks the fact that the diagnosis (that will effect treatment of the patient) is a result of negotiation between doctor and patient. Even at this the biomedical model of health has been really effective at diagnosing & treating most diseases. However the biomedical model is limited, by not taking into consideration the affect of society itself, therefore the prevention of disease is omitted.

So from what I know about the biomedical model of health & illness it is a good thing for doctors who are looking for physical damage in their patients, however it isn't at all helpful with patients who may be sick due to socially challenging problems.

The biomedical model is dominant within medicine today as a means of explaining ill-health. In the biomedical model health is a state of not being ill. The model looks at the human body as if it is some sort of machine, if it breaks down – it will get repaired by the doctor (mechanic). Like a machine the body will operate better & more freely if it is regularly checked or 'serviced'. The role of the doctor is that of the mechanic who will locate the problem & fix it with drugs or surgery, but there isn't always a cure for everything but the medical profession tend to think there is. This contrasts with other societies where ill-health & death are regarded as a normal part of life & should be accepted as such. Within the biomedical model the stress is on individuals as opposed to societies being ill, this

then suggests that there are no social or economic factors that cause disease. Things such as pollution & environmental factors are regarded as irrelevant. Illness is regarded as a physical condition requiring drugs or surgery. However McKeown believes that social conditions are fundamental conditions of disease. He believes that things such as environment (pollution) & standards of living effect health & illness dramatically. McKeown believes that a persons lifestyle & choices of occupation can increase their chances of disease (illness), for example people in social class 5 are leading in most accidents at work compared to those in social class 1, due to the simple fact that their jobs are more life threatening. (E.g. the person doing the more physically active job is more likely to get injured.)

Health & illness varies from different societies, something that may be seen as a minor sickness here in the UK can be like a plague in LEDC's. This is because we may be able to handle the disease better with drugs & surgery whereas other countries/societies may not be able to afford the cures or facilities. Even among the different social classes in Britain illness can be seen in 2 completely different ways, for some people in the lower classes an illness is cured with time itself, because the person isn't as worried about it as those in social class 1. It is a fact that people in social class 1 want to look after their health more effectively than those in the other lower classes, people in social class 1 tend to lead healthier and eco friendly lifestyles. But the biomedical model does not take any of these factors into consideration; therefore I see it as a waste of time from the social side of things, but a godsend from the biological side. There is no question that the biomedical model of health has & will always help with finding cures for various diseases, but it cant help if a lot of peoples diseases today are a large break off from a bad society or environment.

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