Schizophrenia

Psychology 311
Abnormal Psychology
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Overview
- Is known as a psychotic disorder
  - Altered perceptions and consciousness
  - Called hallucinations, delusions, etc.
- Probably consists of more than one disorder
- Is the most devastating disorder
- Occurs in about 1% of the population
  - 20 million people worldwide meet the criteria
  - 2 million or more Americans
- Another 2-3% have Schizotypal Personality Disorder
- No major sex differences in prevalence rates
- Generally,
  - Is a disorder of thought and emotion
  - Is not a "split-personality" disorder.

Costs
- Cost of care = 70 Billion Dollars annually
- Disease is expensive
  - For care
  - Hospitalizations
  - Medications
  - Cost to families
  - Loss of productivity
  - Jog loss
  - Suicidal attempts

Social costs
- Many homeless are untreated or stop meds
- High portion of patients at instate hospitals
- 1 in 4 schizophrenic patients attempt suicide
- 1 in 10 succeed

Characterized by
- Disorganized Thoughts
- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Bizarre behaviors

Two Different Types of Schizophrenic Symptoms
- Researchers group symptoms into two groups
  - Positive
  - Negative
- Helps differentiate the different presenting causes and processes
Positive Symptoms

- Includes
  - Delusions
  - Hallucinations
  - Disorganized speech/bizarre behavior
- More /most frequent in first stages or early episodes
- At least one positive symptom must be present in the active/acute phase for diagnosis to be made

Delusions

- Are faulty interpretations of reality that continue after being exposed to clear evidence that is contrary
- Occur more often in schizophrenia than any other disorder

Examples of Bizarre Delusions

- People controlling your mind
- Outside sources (e.g., radio, etc.) are inserting thoughts in your mind
- Everyone can hear your thoughts
- Others control your feelings

Referential

- Believes certain gestures, newspaper titles, comments, song lyrics, book passages, etc. are for them

Less common

- Delusions of grandiose
- Delusions of persecution
- Being an extremely important person
- May have a religious theme
  - I am God's Messenger

Hallucinations

- Are perceptions that occur in the absence of stimuli
- Are projections of internal impulses and experiences onto perceptual images of the real world
- May occur during fevers, drug use, medical conditions
- Only in schizophrenics do hallucinations happen when in a "normal" state
- Can be associated with any senses
  - Visual
  - Auditory
  - Olfactory
  - Tactile
### Auditory Hallucinations
- Are the most common
  - Voices can make a running commentary
  - Blame the individual for actions or crimes
  - Can issue orders
    - Can be very dangerous

### Tactile and Olfactory
- Tactile
  - Get burning or tingling hallucinations
  - Note: No actual burning is taking place
- Olfactory
  - Is less common
  - Sense foul odors coming from the body
    - Death
    - Sex Change
    - Decay

### Commentary
- What is real to the mind is real to the person
- Person experiences
  - Extreme fright
  - True terror
  - Feels there is no escape

### Positive Hallucinations
- Not all are frightening
- Some offer protection from negative reality
- Person does not want to give them up

### Disordered thinking
- Considered to be the most important characteristic of schizophrenia
- Problem
  - Thinking is difficult to assess
- DSM IV stresses disordered speech

### Disordered Speech
- Typically is described as loosening of associations
  - Switch from one topic to another without any relation between the two
- Example
  - Therapist: explain what this means
    - "The early bird gets the worm"
  - Client
    - There are birds called earliest. You can cut worms in half. I like spaghetti
Preservative speech

- Repetition of words or phrases
- Are often inserted into subsequent sentences
- Example
  - Birds are early, can’t eat an early worm, like spaghetti and worm, early spaghetti

- Not all schizophrenics speak incoherently
  - Some articulate very well

Disorganized Behavior

- Behavior varies widely
- Is usually unpredictable
  - May seem unrelated to surroundings
  - May have angry outbursts
- Not sure if behavior is related to hallucinations or delusions

Catatonia

- Catatonic excitement
  - Get excessive or random motor activity
- Catatonic rigidity
  - Complete lack of movement
  - Can be motionless for hours
  - May experience swelling
  - Man pushed in chair
    - Can move his arm and it stays put
- Can be reduce or eliminated with operant reinforcing and extinguishing techniques

Negative Symptoms

- Have behavior deficits – Flat Affect
  - No eye contact
  - Blank face
  - Monotone voice
  - Apathetic
  - Quiet voice
  - Slow to answer questions
  - Slowed speech
  - Slowed movements
  - Inability to initiate
  - Reduced voluntary movements

Are difficult to evaluate

- Symptoms are at the “end of the line” for normal behavior
- Without hallucinations or delusions
  - Not sure if you have schizophrenia or depression

Diagnosis

- Must be continuously ill for at least 6 months.
- Need to have one psychotic phase where you have
  - Delusions
  - Hallucinations
  - Disordered thoughts, incoherence, or other symptoms.

- See DSM IV for more detail
Conclusion

- Severe disorder
- Most people can be treated effectively
- Many people stop taking their medications
- Revolving door syndrome
- Future, work
  - Decreasing drug side effects
  - Examine the genetics associated underlying the disorder.