



New Direction in Understanding of Personality Disorders

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Abstract. A personality disorder is a common complex mental disorder. There are a lot of types of personality disorders, different types will cause different severe effects. At present, the clinical diagnosis and treatment of personality disorders are more difficult, because the specific causes of personality disorders have not been determined and with the occurrence of personality disorders, there will be many other common mental disorders complicate, such as depression, mania, and anxiety, this is why personality disorders more difficult to treat and much more serious. Therefore, research on related diseases has attracted much attention. The article is an overview of personality disorders, it contains detailed definitions of common personality disorders, etiology, possible contributory factors of cause disorders, the effects of the disease in different ways, the influence in different ways, some treatment, limitations, and implications. Overall, people can gain more insight into this personality disorder.

Keywords: Mental illness · Personality disorder · disease · behavior · treatment

1 Introduction

Personality disorders are complex diseases. First, the condition for determining a person with a personality disorder is that the person had corresponding symptoms for a long time. Among these long-term symptoms, the typical symptoms are social avoidance, irritability, and excessive dependence on others, these require long-term observation. Likewise, these behaviors affect a person's growth, and ability to learn and live. For example, when a person is overly dependent on others, he will lose his ability to take care of himself and will be difficult to survive without others; or if he avoids social interaction, his social circle will be extremely limited, and his awareness of the surrounding environment will be very limited; or irritability and emotionality, most people cannot accept that their friends are always suddenly angry and make some irrational behaviors, so it is difficult for this person to be accepted by others for a long time and easy to hurt others. Second, people with personality disorders often have many complications, therefore, making them more difficult to treat. Overall, the disruptive nature of personality

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disorders, as well as the fact that their symptoms are long-lasting and affect multiple areas of functioning, means that these are possibly the most challenging group of disorders to manage. In addition, individuals with personality disorders may not even be able to recognize that their personality is causing distress or issues with other people, the reason may be that in their cognition, their behavior is correct and normal. The paper will introduce in detail the types, causes, effects, treatment, and so on of personality disorders [1, 2].

Because the formation of personality disorders is very complex, so far, it is difficult for us to estimate the prevalence and find the specific cause of the disease, and only the factors that may lead to the disease have been found, and other mental illnesses often accompany personality disorders at the same time, so that making treatment even more difficult. For psychological research and therapy, this question remains to be explored.

This article will discuss a variety of questions about personality disorders by consulting the literature. It contains causes, effects, treatment, and some cases of personality disorders.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Basic Definition and Common Personality Disorders

In the field of psychology, “personality” refers to the set of enduring behavioral and mental traits that distinguish an individual from other people. According to the DSM-5, people with personality disorders pervasively have differs significantly from the norms and expectations of their culture mainly in 4 ways cognition (i.e., different perceptions, interpretations of self, and perspectives on others and things), affect (i.e. the range, intensity, lability, and appropriateness of emotional response), interpersonal functioning, or impulse control. These cause them and/or others around them “clinically significant” distress and impairment in important areas of functioning, such as social and study. Above features are applied across many contexts, such as school, work, and home, and enduring (i.e., has been exhibited over a long duration of time, since at least adolescence or early adulthood). At the same time, these behaviors cannot be better explained by another mental disorder or be due to the direct physiological effects of a substance or general medical condition (e.g., head trauma).

There are mainly 10 specific personality disorders: (1) Paranoid personality disorders, a pattern of distrust and suspiciousness such that others’ motives are interpreted as malevolent. (2) Schizoid personality disorder, a pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of emotional expression. (3) Schizotypal personality disorder, a pattern of acute discomfort in close relationships, cognitive or perceptual distortions, and eccentricities of behaviors. (4) Antisocial personality disorder, is a pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others. (5) Borderline personality disorder, a pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity. (6) Histrionic personality disorder, a pattern of excessive emotionality and attention-seeking. (7) Narcissistic personality disorder, a pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy. (8) Avoidant personality disorder, a pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation. (9) Dependent personality disorder, a pattern of submissive and clinging behavior related to

an excessive need to be taken care of. (10) Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, is a pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and control [3].

2.2 Etiology

2.2.1 Genes

From a genetic perspective, genes are an essential factor in personality disorders. People whose parents have personality disorders are more likely to generate morbid personalities because some particular temperaments may be passed on to children by their parents through genes [4]. These genes may make them vulnerable to personality disorders. Genes that affect personality disorders are rarely known. The genes which may be related to the disorders involve those that manage neurotransmitters “such as serotonin, dopamine, amines, etc.” [5]. Besides, identical twins have a higher concordance rate than fraternal twins in the aspects of personality disorders and crime [4]. That is, the closer the kinship is, the higher the probability of getting the disorder is. In addition, modern neuropsychological tests show that the hurt to brain function during its development stage also influences the formation of personality.

2.2.2 Psychological Factors

In terms of psychological factors, people with personality disorders have a lower degree of autonomic response to static state and tension stimulation than normal, which prevents them from obtaining a message from their experience. Apart from that, children’s early experience in their living environment and home education they got play an important role in personality growth as well [4]. For instance, if a child is deficient in maternal love, this may lead to the formation of a bland character. As another example, if parents are too strict with their children, children’s temperament may become anxious and shy. Some individuals may show defiant and even antisocial behaviors during their adolescence [4].

2.2.3 Cultural Aspect

Moreover, social and cultural factors are also crucial to the emergence of personality disorders [4]. For instance, in some places, there are some malformed social phenomena such as taking drugs, child pregnancy, intemperance, etc. [4], which are extremely harmful to children’s physical and mental health. What’s more, an undesirable social atmosphere including discrimination, stigma, and so on is also related to the causes of personality disorders. It is essential to maintain a healthy and inclusive social environment to protect people’s mental health.

2.3 Impact

A personality disorder is a common mental disease, and different types of personality disorders will affect people to different degrees. These effects can also have physical, social, environmental, productivity, and cognitive effects on the sufferer and those around the sufferer. The purpose of this paragraph is to introduce the impact of personality disorders on patients’ daily life in different aspects.

2.3.1 Physical Health

According to current research studies, personality disorders do not have any direct impact on the basic physiological functions and health of the patient. This is because personality disorders have more of an impact on thinking and cognition. However, the cognitive effects of personality disorders can further affect people's physical health. For example, the emotions caused by personality disorders may lead to the risk of suicide, self-harm, or even death, and personality disorders can greatly affect people's routine and diet, thus affecting basic bodily functions.

2.3.2 Social Features

Different personality disorders directly affect people's social functioning in different ways and to different degrees. People may exhibit extreme emotions such as dependency, passivity, and demandingness, or they may be unable to communicate with others due to social withdrawal and isolation because of a (non-delusional) belief that changes have occurred and that they are stigmatized. Personality disorders may be too focused on their feelings to the detriment of others, or too focused on the feelings of others to the detriment of themselves. Excessive suspicion, jealousy, and resentment can make it difficult for patients to make true friends. In terms of behavior, emotions, and cognition, personality disorders can cause great stress, and distress and have an impact on a person's emotions. In this case, the patient gradually loses the social function of interacting with others, which means that the patient is overly concerned with what others think of him or her and gradually loses judgment. Personality disorders affect people not only on one level of perception but in all aspects. People may have different personality disorders in the areas of behavior, emotions, cognition, and physical health that led to poor emotional regulation. You can be impulsive; alcoholic; substance use; self-harm; suicidal; hysterical; bad relationships that don't last; sensitive; distrust of others; empty; insecure; fear of abandonment; prone to aggression; the desire to form strong bonds; etc.

2.3.3 The Work Efficiency

People with personality disorders usually avoid and are afraid to interact with people, but collaboration is inevitable, whether in the workplace or at school. This is common and easy for most people to do, but it can be challenging for people with personality disorders. In some group activities or business collaborations, social barriers and over-sensitivity due to personality disorders can make it difficult for the person to communicate and misunderstand each other. This may make it difficult to move things forward or force them to stop. To a large extent, it affects the efficiency of work and study. Essentially, personality disorders affect most cooperative work.

2.3.4 In Terms of Behavior, Emotion and Cognition

Personality disorders can have a dramatic impact on an individual's behavior, mood, and cognition. This greatly affects the mental health of the patient. It can cause tremendous stress and distress, leading to complications such as depression or autism. Personality disorders make them hypersensitive and fearful of social interaction and contact with

others. As a result, they can feel depressed and alone. They can be ambivalent because their heart wants to socialize, but they have to avoid it due to different factors. Many people with personality disorders are also at risk of developing schizophrenia [6].

2.3.5 Environment

Personality disorders appear in the patient's childhood, and if they are not treated promptly and effectively, they may affect the patient's life, affect the patient's interpersonal interactions, and cause the patient to develop an irresponsible personality, which means that he or she may cause harm to others. At the same time, patients may cause an anti-social personality, so the impact on the social and human environment should not be underestimated. Personality disorder patients also tend to blame others for their faults. At the same time, patients are often prone to be too selfish, thus ignoring the feelings of others and never taking into account the feelings of others. Personality disorders can affect those around them depending on the severity of the patient, and the severity may affect society [6].

2.4 Treatment

2.4.1 Evidence-Based Treatment

There are several psychotherapies used to treat personality disorders but relevant research is still scarce. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), a short-term, problem-focused therapy [7], is widely used for personality disorders. Its purpose is to change patients' negative thinking patterns so that they can deal with daily challenges by themselves. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is effective in treating some comorbid symptoms such as depression and anxiety [7].

Another commonly used therapy is psychodynamic therapy. In the psychodynamic context, two main difficulties in personality disorders are having active and stable self-awareness and building steady relationships. Meanwhile, these are two basic missions of developing a personality. The main idea of the psychodynamic theory is projective identification which is a method of replaying a person's internal object relationships by externalizing his or her childhood patterns. According to this, the patient may recreate the atmosphere he or she experienced during childhood and present his or her behavior "in a characterologically driven way" [8].

Dialectical behavior therapy is also an effective treatment that focuses on acceptance and mindfulness. It includes skills in the aspects of behavior, cognition, and support. It aims to control self-harm first and then improve emotional dysregulation which is regarded as the kernel of personality disorders. DBT is the major treatment for borderline personality disorder and is lately utilized for other disorders such as antisocial personality disorder [7].

2.4.2 Paths of Care

In addition to evidence-based treatment, appropriate methods of daily care are also vital in the process of treating personality disorders. First, it is a good choice to do some physical activities. Physical activities have some advantageous influences on depression

and anxiety [9], which are two comorbid symptoms of personality disorder. In terms of cognitive functioning, it is stated that regular physical activity can be a promoter of “improved cognitive performance and academic achievement” [9].

Another helpful method is joining a support group. People who have similar experiences are more likely to understand each other and give each other support and encouragement. In this case, they may become more confident and active in the treatment. What’s more, expressing can be beneficial. Possible ways include writing, drawing, talking with families and friends, etc. Expressing can make people perceive their emotions and deepen their understanding and cognition of themselves. At the same time, expressing is a way of releasing, which can let people feel relaxed.

Last but not least, relaxation also plays an important part in patients’ caring. Common techniques such as meditation and yoga are recommended. As an example, meditation can help people concentrate and reach a state of deep inner peace.

3 Limitations and Future Implications

In the current research on personality disorders, there are many kinds of personality disorders, and their causes are different. So each case has a completely different treatment plan and causes (to put it another way, they all have unique factors) and we can’t find the specific cause and plan so we can’t cure it. In addition, the deficiencies of current research lie in that on the one hand, people do not realize the importance of personality disorders, and adults do not realize the importance of children’s mental health. At the same time, currently, there is no way to cure personality disorders, so more attention should be invested in future research (combined with examples) to try to find a more effective way to alleviate or cure personality disorders. In my personal opinion, a personality disorder can be alleviated through teamwork. In the above study, it was found that many people with personality disorders avoided group activities and social interaction. I think a detailed plan can be made to gradually make patients trust others, after which patients can start to participate in group activities under the guidance of a psychologist. It’s a great exercise for these patients to get in touch with other people and work together. I believe that this can appropriately alleviate the personality disorder and restore the patient’s social function. Another inspiration is that I think treatment can be carried out according to individual cases of personality disorders. For example, we can deeply inspire the things or hobbies that patients care about and then find peers or family members to create an environment that patients with personality disorders are interested in. It is easier for them to open up and take the first step to communicating with others when they are attracted by their interests [7–10].

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, genes, psychological factors such as home education, and cultural background all have influences on the formation of personality disorders. People with personality disorders are usually influenced in the aspects such as physical health, social functions, work efficiency, emotional regulation ability, their surrounding environment, etc. Psychotherapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and psychodynamic therapy

are commonly used to treat the disorder. It is important to combine evidence-based psychotherapies and daily care by using some techniques such as meditation. There is no way to cure personality disorders at present and more efforts should be made in the future through making more relevant research and improving people's awareness about it and attention to mental health.

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