




CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES TO PSYCHIATRY

MBCh.B YEAR IV

Introduction

- There are three approaches to mental illness as follows:
 - Biological
 - Determinants of mental illness are internal (physical body)
 - Psychological
 - Determinants of mental illness are internal (in the mind)
 - Sociological
 - Determinants of mental illness are external (in environment or person's social situation)

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- This is because behaviour is determined by the interplay of the individual's
 - Environment
 - Life experiences
 - Biological endowment
 - All these operates within a culture to influence mental illness.
 - These aspects are therefore important in psychiatry because they have a role to play in etiology, assessment and management

Social sciences

- Definition
 - A group of academic disciplines or branch of science that studies behaviour , society and the relationships of individual within the society
- The most relevant social sciences are:
 - Psychology
 - Sociology
 - Anthropology
- The social sciences are concerned with the study of man's social behaviour in society and have close link with psych.

Psychiatry

- Is a medical science concerned with:
 - Mental processes of the individual
 - The social interaction between the doctor, the patient and others (relatives and workmates)
 - Assessment of the problem and intervention.
 - Psychiatry's general approach stresses the unity of body and mind

Psychology

- Is the study of basic psychological processes such as perception, learning, memory, language, thought and emotions.

- **Branches of psychology**
- 1) Developmental psychology
 - Is the study of:
 - How children acquire and use language
 - Effects of early attachment and separation from parents

- The processes and functions of play and
- The effect of ageing on basic processes such as memory and thinking.

3) Social psychology

- Study of behaviour in its social context by observation and analysis of individuals

4) Clinical psychology

- Concerned with scientific knowledge about problems such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia.
- Clinical psychologists specialize in psychotherapy

Contribution of psychology to psychiatry

Assessment

- Assessment personal and interpersonal factors.
- Administers tests e.g. Educational and personality tests to determine psychopathology
- Observes the patient behaviour in wards or at home

Intervention

- Provides psychotherapy e.g. cognitive behaviour therapy, family therapy, supportive psychotherapy

Research


- Uses social science and experimental methods of research used in psychiatry

Evaluation

- Reviewing the value of a treatment to determine the effectiveness and efficacy

Sociology

- Is the study of institutions in society and the interaction between the institutions.
- Committed to solving social problems such as poverty and anomie arising from industrial revolution.
- **Branches of sociology**
 - 1) Medical sociology/Psychiatric social work
 - Focuses on the interaction between people, the patient, the doctor
 - Link between hospital and people in the community

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- Demonstrates that mental illness is not randomly distributed among the population but tends to occur more in disadvantaged groups
 - Effective treatments are not equally available—some have better access than others
 - Hence concerned with social and economic justice
 - Therefore, sociological explanations are important for mental health policy makers.

Contribution of sociology to psychiatry

Assessment

- Identifies psychosocial problems contributing to mental illnesses – Predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating
- Focuses on environmental influences

Treatment and rehabilitation

- Social workers acts as intermediary between patient, family and the treatment team
- Prepares both the patient and family for his return home
- Follow up of patient in community and ensures his wellbeing through social support

Community awareness

- Creates awareness about mental illnesses through public education
- Encourages acceptance of mental illness in the community

Anthropology

- Anthropology is from the Greek word meaning “the study of man”
- Anthropology is the study of mankind including its origins, development, social and political organizations, religions, languages, art and artifacts.
- **Branches of anthropology**
 - 1) Socio-cultural anthropology
 - Social anthropology focuses on culture as the way that man organizes and legitimizes his society

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- Cultural anthropology focuses more on the systems of symbols, ideas and meanings that compromise a culture and social organizations

2) Medical Anthropology

- Concerned with the interaction between the biological and socio-cultural aspects to influence health, illness and disease.
- For example, supernatural forces or sorcery are blamed on peoples misfortunes including mental illness.

Contribution of anthropology to psychiatry

Culture and diagnosis

- Culture plays a central role in diagnosis
- Culture defines the way people express physical or mental illnesses
- Complaints and symptoms are expressed in the idiom of the community or particular culture
- In Africa anxiety and depression seem to be somatised
- Important to determine if the patient's symptoms are in line with the cultural patterns

Management

- Ancestors have the power to bless
- Ritual healing - mobilization of social support, reaffirmation of basic values and group cohesion
- Reduces anxiety in both the ill person and his family

Research

- Participant observation
- (Used to study delinquents or criminal gang)

Religion and mental illness

- **Symptoms**
 - Expressed according to religious upbringing
 - Content of delusions or hallucinations are often religious in nature
- **Etiology**
 - Disconnection of the relationship between the individual and God.

. Management

1) Supportive


- Source of support to individual throughout life. Prayer is beneficial.
- Religious leaders provide counseling and practical help to individual members

2) Faith

- Having faith is very important in the process of well – being of an individual.


3) Counseling and guidance

- Patients encouraged to have faith and to obey God and lawful authorities

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- People should have respect, be harmonious, understanding, forgive and be patient with other people.
 - All these are said to be antidotes for good mental illness.

Why are social sciences important in psychiatry

- Limitations of biomedical approach in management resulted in emphasis on the biopsychosocial approach.
- This is because behaviour is determined by the interplay of the individual's environment, life experiences, and biological endowment within a culture.
- Meaning psychiatric problems are caused by a combination of physical, psychological and social – cultural factors


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- These aspects are important in psychiatry because they play a role in etiology, assessment and management.
 - It is therefore important to use the biopsychosocial model in management of mental disorders.

Susan Nyamogi's family

- **Case of alcoholism**

- **The several outcomes of the case**

- Mr. Nyamogi lost his job due to alcoholism
 - Agreed to enter alcohol treatment programme
 - The professional team at the alcohol treatment centre included:
 - a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and social workers with training in alcohol treatment and other substance abuse.


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- May be looking for a job after treatment and none available
 - Being recovering alcoholic may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation
 - Rehabilitation specialist will be involved.
 - If Susan decides to leave her husband she will have no source of income and become poor single mother.
 - Will require financial aid
 - Financial organizations will be involved

How different disciplines relate

- A sociologist may study social problems surrounding the case by :
 - Interviewing the Nyamogi's family to learn their view about the problem and assess their needs
 - A social worker will provide crisis counseling, practical help
- A psychologist may provide counseling and psychotherapy (individual and group)
- A consulting psychiatrist would provide medication to the patient.
- The different disciplines work as a team for the benefits of the patient .

Reference

- Sadock and Sadock (2005): Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry Eighth Edition, Vol. 1. Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.



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