Theories of Sociopathic Disorder

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# Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to uncover all the facts and findings related to the sociopathic disorder. In order to better understand the sociopathic disorder, many theories have been made that tend to explain the causes, symptoms and possible solutions to such disorders. While some theories try to find out the reasons why something works the way it does in order to find a way to correct it ultimately, there are theorists who believe that one does not always have to know why something works the way it does in order to correct it. This counter-intuitive approach is a cognitive behavioral theory. In this research paper, the theories are discussed and analyzed in such a way so as to provide detailed knowledge of antisocial personality disorder

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# Introduction

Sociopathy is a condition in which a person tends to have no regard for what is right and what is wrong and completely ignores the rights and feelings of other people. People who have this disorder not only treat other people harshly, they try to manipulate them. Individuals who suffer from this disorder are violent and impulsive; they break the law and can also become criminals yet feel no guilt in their actions. Such people cannot become family or work oriented.

The antisocial personality disorder is more common in males than it is in females, in males mostly it is seen in men who abuse alcohol and drugs or those who spent a long time in prisons. Children who get into prison can get this disorder easily because of the childhood environment they get (Montano et al., 2015). The theories contain beliefs and thoughts an actions performed by people with such problems and connect the beliefs and the thoughts and try to make meaning out of the actions of the disturbed individuals. The theories also provide models that showcase the findings and also research done on the subjects.

The theories that tend to check and study the reasons behind disorder arises in people explain the symptoms and the potential causes of antisocial personality disorder. The theories define the disorder as a pattern of disregard for others and the violations of the rights of others. The symptoms can vary in their severity, and the more harmful or dangerous behavior patterns are referred to as psychopathic.

# Non-Cognitive Theories

The causes of sociopathy can be both biological and environmental. When looking at the biological causes, scientific theories suggest that the brain of a sociopath develops slowly as compared to that of a normal person. Any early brain damage for example in an accident could also lead to this. Brain functioning tests like the fMRIs and the EEGs confirm that this disorder does have brain-based causes. Now according to the theory, the genetics need to be present, but the more important point is the environments or the conditions that trigger them. These conditions can be child abuse, trauma, rejection or even extreme abuse.

The theories also study the symptoms of the disorder. The various symptoms most commonly include the subjects disregard for the laws or the rules and regulations of society, the violation of both the physical and emotional rights of others while feeling zero guilt whatsoever, the subject is usually impulsive and reckless in nature and also highly aggressive. The symptoms also include a lack of remorse or lack of a stable life, a stable job or a house to live. Deceitfulness is also a symptom and of course as already mentioned an early childhood diagnosis is also another symptom for the disorder.

# Cognitive Theory

The cognitive behavioral theory tends to focus on finding solutions rather than to ponder over why the problem raised in the first place. The theory does not become completely silent about the origins of the disorder, according to this theory people react in different ways to events according to the interpretation they make about them. Now the problem with this disorder is that people suffering from this disorder interpret every action of others as something negative. The theory suggests that two factors shape a person personality that is nature and nurture. Nature is the inherited part or the temperament. Nurture is simply known as the environment of children.

The theory strongly emphasizes on the point that personality development has a strong link to social experiences during childhood. According to this theory, the kind of environment in which a child is brought up is very important. The events that take place in the childhood shape the personality of the individual and if the individual has faced abuse or trauma in childhood this could possibly distort his perceptions and interpretations of these experiences, for example, the individual might find it normal to abuse children because he faced so much abuse in his childhood.

The cognitive theory talks about the core beliefs of the people. It suggests that the core beliefs are what represent a person’s actions and if the core beliefs are distorted or if they are misinterpreted and biased then this can lead to the sociopathic disorder.

The cognitive theory is, however, more than just this and is explained a lot deeper. Now the two aspects on which we view cognition are automatic thoughts and the schemas.

## The Automatic Thoughts

The automatic thoughts are first of all thought at the moment, so they are the emotions that we give at that given moment in reaction to that specific event that happened at that specific time. These thoughts are self-driven they just pop up in one's mind, and the person who gets the thought actually does not notice the actual thought rather the emotion that the specific automatic thought carries with it. They can be called a set of meanings that are accepted by the individual without any evaluation; for example' I am an idiot' or ‘I am a bad person.' So in steps, an event happens that causes a cognition that creates an automatic thought, and it leads to some emotion.

## The Schemas

The schemas are divided again into two domains which are the core beliefs and the intermediate beliefs. The core belief is the basic structure that one makes about life. It is the basic assumption that a person makes about his or her environment and also the assumptions he makes about the world as a whole. Now, these beliefs are created or formulated as a result of early life experiences of a person, his memories, brought up and the social environment associated with it. Once developed these beliefs are reinforced throughout the years. This happens when the person experiences similar situations and scenarios that made up those beliefs in the first place. Now the individual accepts these beliefs and does not even try to change them and holds them as fundamentals. These can be helpless core beliefs like ‘I am weak' or unlovable core beliefs like ‘no one loves me,' or even worthless core beliefs like ‘I am a coward.'

## The Core Beliefs

The core beliefs are present in all people as pairs. This includes both the beliefs ‘everyone loves me', and ‘no one loves me.' Now if one is the positive belief while other is the negative belief both happen to a person from time to time, and it depends on the mental health of the person that how he or she responds to that belief. For example when a normal person gets a negative experience like losing a loved one he gets the negative belief that ‘no one loves me,' this causes the person to go into depression, and the person feels down and sad for some time. After some time the person gets out of the depression, and the positive belief becomes activated, and he thinks better of himself. Now in the case of a person who suffers from a sociopathic disorder that person has a problem, once he gets the negative belief activated it does not deactivate and even if the person experiences anything positive he tends to believe only in the negative aspects.

## The Intermediate Beliefs

The second belief is the intermediate belief. These are not verbal laws or rules, but these are the assumptions and rules that the person follows. These are some set rules and expectations one has from himself and other people. The important point is that intermediate beliefs actually join automatic thoughts and core beliefs. Now they have some functions as well. The first function that the intermediate beliefs perform is that they try to justify or give an explanation in favor of the core beliefs whenever a person experiences something that contradicts with his core belief, so for example if someone believes that all people are bad then if someone comes up and treats him good his mind will come up with the explanation that the person was also good to him because he had an ulterior motive behind his good behavior. The second function the intermediate belief performs is that it helps lead us a life according to our belief, and finally the intermediate belief protects the person from the complete intensity of the core belief so if a person believes that he sucks at sports the intermediate belief will put a thought that ‘if I get selected in the team I won't suck anymore’.

# The Cognitive Behavioral Model

From the theory, the cognitive-behavioral model assumes that all the core beliefs are either genetically passed down or form through early life experiences, these core beliefs then determine the intermediate beliefs and together they are the schema. Now we can this of this schema as our pool of information from which the automatic thoughts arise whenever we face or experience any new event, and these automatic thoughts shape our emotions and our feelings. Now to explain the model from the point of view of the person who suffers from the sociopathic disorder, we take such a person, and we examine him as he comes across some people. Now what he actually thinks at that time is to inflict harm on the people and hurt them in some manner, now these thoughts stem from the intermediate thought that he must strike first or else he will lose and in this whole scenario what is the core belief? It is simply that the person believes that he will get hurt because he is weak.

To understand the theory we look at the young children and try to understand how their experiences affect them. We look at the domains that affect the basic emotional needs of a child. These include disconnection and rejection which leads them not to trust anyone and to abuse people, dependence, incompetence, and insufficient self-control (Dakanalis et al., 2015).

According to the theory, scientists form tests and use their scientific research to understand the disorder further. The tests mostly aim to get a better understanding of the problem by examining the children and their different upbringing and then how these experiences affect such people in later life (Dakanalis et al., 2015). The studies conducted aim to get as much information as possible on the disorder so as to get to know more about it as there is still much that we don’t know and many cases in which the scientists have no answer to the problem as the data does not match what they collected previously.

# Present Analysis

Nowadays the disorder has started to spread even more, and we see it in children, in prisoners and even in people who have served in the army. As these people spend a lot of time in an extreme situation there mind does not feel ready to accept anything as normal anymore so even when such people return to their normal lives their brain still works in a mode ready to see and analyze another extreme situation, and so even the most normal of experiences become complex for them, and they end up harm, in people who actually mean to do something good for them. Due to this, these people are no longer capable of maintaining a stable life (Krstic et al., 2017). They have family problems with incidents of a person physically hurting their spouse. Due to their extreme experiences they don't trust anyone anymore, and this distrust turns into hate, and this is why people with such disorders cannot work a job thus, in the end, they stop functioning like a normal human. Some of these people hurt themselves if not others around them and suicides associated with people with sociopathic disorders are on the rise.

The St Leo's values of excellence work hard to inculcate values in its students that develop character and good morals so as to become responsible leaders, who know how to define right and wrong and value the rights of their fellow students.

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