Treatment of Mental Disorders

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Outline

- A dark history
- Barbaric treatments
- Change in attitude
- Birth of Psychiatry
- Psychosurgery
- Psychopharmacology
- Other approaches
- Effectiveness
Dark beginnings

- “The Practice of Physick: Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes” Thomas Willis (1684)

“they can break cords and chains, break down doors or walls…they are almost never tired…they bear cold, heat, watching, fasting, strokes and wounds, without any sensible hurt.”
Weakening

- Somatic Treatments
  - Bleeding (up to 4/5 of blood)
  - Purging
  - Starvation
  - Blistering
  - Beating
  - Restraint

[Image: William Norris Circa 1814 was kept nearly 20 years in this harness - Bethlem Hospital Wellcome Institute Library]
Cooling

- Somatic treatments
  - Hosing
  - Dunking: ‘The Bath of Surprise’
  - Temporary drowning ‘The Chinese Temple’

“tank prepared...into which the patient, enclosed in a coffin-like box with holes, was lowered...until bubbles of air cease to rise, then was taken out, rubbed and revived.”
Twirling

- Somatic treatments
  - Cox’s swing
  - Spinning beds
  - Spinning stools
  - The gyrator
Restraint

- Restraining devices
  - The tranquiliser chair
  - The mad-shirt
  - The restraint chest
The Golden Era

- Quakers of York
  - Death of Hanna Mills (1791)
    - End of Torment
  - New retreat
    - Recreational activities
    - Respect and gentle treatment
    - Warm baths
- Suffering human beings
- Improved rates of success
- Threat to medical establishment
Birth of Psychiatry

- History showed moral treatment worked
  - Too expensive
  - Cost cutting
  - Seemed to be failing
- End of American Civil War
- Change in belief about mental health
  - Nervous illness
  - Exhausted nerves in the brain
- Biological basis
- Requires medical establishment
Return to the dark age

- 1900’s -1950’s
- Biological Treatments
  - Deep sleep (barbiturates 6% died)
  - Fever therapy (10% died)
  - Refrigeration therapy (3/16 died)
- Brain Damaging therapeutics
  - Insulin coma (80% cured)
  - Metrazol convulsive therapy (43% spinal fractures)
  - Psychosurgery
  - Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
Psychosurgery I

Figure 5 – Lobotomia transorbitária (Longo et alii, 1956).
Psychosurgery II

- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)
  - 100 volts passed through the brain
  - Causing seizures
  - 6-10 treatments
Modern Psychosurgery

- Deep brain stimulation (DBS)
  - Implant near the affected brain region
  - Gives off electric pulses
  - Disrupts brain circuits
Psychopharmacology

- Psychotropic drugs
  - Change brain function
- Attempt to control disorder
- Alleviate symptoms
  - Also, expense of institutionalisation
  - Drugs are the answer!
Antipsychotics

- Antipsychotic
  - Treat positive symptoms of schizophrenia
    - e.g. Chlorpromazine
  - Medical lobotomy
    - Aggressively marketed
    - Calmer, less fearful, clearer of mind
    - Mummified, jittery, confused, fearful, zombified – the worst misery

- Atypical antipsychotics
  - Positive and negative symptoms
    - e.g. Risperidone
  - Clinical trials purposefully designed
    - 36 suicides during trials
    - Never published
Do they work?

- Atypical antipsychotics slightly more effective
  - Negative symptoms
  - Cognitive deficits
- Combination therapy to increase desirable effects
  - Decrease undesirable effects
- Not without side effects
  - Drowsiness - Dizziness when changing positions - Blurred vision - Rapid heartbeat - Sensitivity to the sun - Skin rashes - Menstrual problems for women
- Long-term effects of atypical drugs
  - Tardive dyskinesia
Antidepressants

- **Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors**
  - Increase norepinephrine, serotonin

- **Tricyclics**
  - Decrease norepinephrine, serotonin

- **Different drugs for different brains**

- **Side effects**
  - Dry mouth
  - Nausea, diarrhea or constipation
  - Headache
  - Drowsiness
  - Insomnia
  - Skin reaction
  - Dizziness or light headedness
  - Involuntary muscle jerks
  - Change in blood pressure
  - Reduced sexual desire or difficulty reaching orgasm
  - Sleep disturbances
  - Weight gain
  - Difficulty urinating
  - Muscle aches
  - Prickling or tingling sensation in the skin
  - Blurred vision
  - Drowsiness
  - Increased sweating.
New Antidepressants

- SSRI, SNRI, NRI
- Reuptake inhibitors
  - Target selective neurotransmitters
- More effective
  - Still many side effects
- Also poisonous
- Also addictive!
  - Can cause withdrawals
Other approaches

- Psychodynamic
  - Conflict resolution
- Humanistic
  - Person centred
- Behavioural
  - Conditioning
    - Exposure therapy
    - Token Economy
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Systematic desensitisation
Effectiveness

- Different disorders
  - Differing degrees
    - Different causes
- Evolving understanding
- Many approaches
  - Personal vs Group therapy
    - e.g. AA, NA
- No stand out approach
- What is effective treatment?
  - Consider the individual
  - Consider the family
  - Consider society