Neurotic and Personality Disorders

LPT Gondar Mental Health Group

www.le.ac.uk
Neurosis

- Originally coined by the Scottish physician William Cullen in 1769. Included a range of conditions e.g. epilepsy, mania, hysteria, diabetes etc., in which there was felt to be a general deficiency of the nervous system without fever.
Neurosis – modern definition

- Eysenk – behaviour which is associated with strong emotion which is maladaptive and which the person realises is absurd, nonsensical or irrelevant, but which he is powerless to change.

- Oxford textbook – a widely used collective term for psychiatric disorders that have three things in common…not accompanied by organic brain disease…not psychoses…discrete onset rather than a continuous development from early life.
Neurosis – what we really mean

- Phobic anxiety disorders
- Other anxiety disorders
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Reaction to severe stress and adjustment disorders
- Dissociation and conversion disorders
- Somatoform disorders
Anxiety Symptoms 1
WTINP page 8

Physical

- Palpitations
- A feeling of suffocation
- Dizziness
- Trembling
- Headaches
- Pins and needles
Anxiety Symptoms 2

Thoughts and feelings

- Feeling that something terrible is going to happen
- Fear
- Worrying
- Thoughts that he/she is going to die
- Repeated distressing thoughts
Anxiety Symptoms 3

Behaviour

- Avoiding situations that give rise to anxiety
  e.g. public transport, market places
- Poor sleep
Phobic anxiety disorders

- Agoraphobia - public places
- Social phobias - social groups
- Specific phobias - heights, spiders
Other anxiety disorders

- Panic disorder – discrete episodes of high levels of anxiety
- Generalised anxiety disorder- feelings of anxiety for much of the time
Cases
Obsessive compulsive disorder

- Obsession – a recurrent and intrusive thought, feeling, idea, image or sensation
- Compulsion – a conscious, standardised, recurrent thought or behaviour, such as counting, checking, or avoiding.
- Most sufferers realise the irrationality of their thoughts and behaviours
Reaction to severe stress, and adjustment disorders

- Acute stress reaction
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Adjustment disorders
Post traumatic stress disorder

WTINP page 138

- After a traumatic event
- Low mood, lack of interest, aches and pains, irritability
- Increased arousal/vigilance
- Avoidance
- Nightmares, flashbacks
Cases

- Page 7 Case 1.3
- Page 19 Box 1.13 paragraph 1
Dissociative (conversion) disorders

- Used to be called hysteria
- Amnesia
- Fugue
- Stupor
Somatoform disorders

- Somatization disorder (a.k.a. multiple complaint syndrome)
- Hypochondriacal disorder

See liaison lecture
Personality disorders
What is a personality disorder?

- Deeply ingrained and enduring behaviour patterns, manifesting themselves as inflexible responses to a broad range of personal and social situations.

- Represent either extreme or significant deviations from the way the average individual in a given culture perceives, thinks, feels, and particularly relates to others.

- Tend to be stable and encompass multiple domains of behaviour and psychological functioning

- Frequently but not always associated with various degrees of subjective stress and problems in social functioning and performance
Personality disorders and stigma

- Historically “the patients psychiatrists loved to hate” (Lewis & Appleby 1988)

- Not a mental illness

- Not interested

- Unfortunately PD or BPD means “I don’t like this person” far too frequently
Specific personality disorders

- paranoid
- Schizoid
- Dissocial
- Emotionally unstable – impulsive
- Emotionally unstable – borderline
- Histrionic
- Anankastic
- Anxious (avoidant)
- Dependent
Schizoid = robot

- Few pleasurable activities
- Emotional coldness
- Limited ability to express warmth or anger to others
- Apparent indifference to praise or criticism
- Lack of friends
- Insensitivity to social norms
Dissocial = psychopath

- Callous unconcern for feelings of others
- Irresponsible and disregard of social norms
- Incapacity to maintain relationships despite having no problem establishing them
- Low tolerance to frustration and low threshold for discharge of aggression, including violence
- Incapacity to experience guilt
- Prone to blame others
Histrionic = actress at the Oscars

- Self dramatisation
- Easily influenced by circumstances
- Shallow and labile
- Continual seeking for excitement and activities in which the patient is the centre of attention
- Inappropriate seductiveness
- Over concern with physical attractiveness
Anankastic = ethics committee member, or bank manager, or accountant

- Feelings of excessive doubt or caution
- Preoccupation with details and rules
- Perfectionism that interferes with task completion
- Excessive pedantry and adherence to social conventions
- Rigid and stubborn
- Unreasonable insistence that others submit to their way of doing things
- Intrusion of unwelcome thoughts or impulses
Emotionally unstable – a.k.a. borderline PD

- Most commonly encountered
- Most troublesome to us
- Treatments are various and continuing to be recognised
Features of borderline PD

- Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment
- Unstable and intense interpersonal relationships
- Disturbed, distorted, unstable sense of self
- Impulsive
- Recurrent suicidal threats, gestures or behaviour
- Affective instability
- Chronic feelings of emptiness
- Inappropriate intense anger