

PSYC 260 (A01) INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



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Winter 2017

Today's Topics



- Understand “risk factor” vs. “cause”
- Understand etiological models
 - Biopsychosocial models
 - Diathesis-stress models

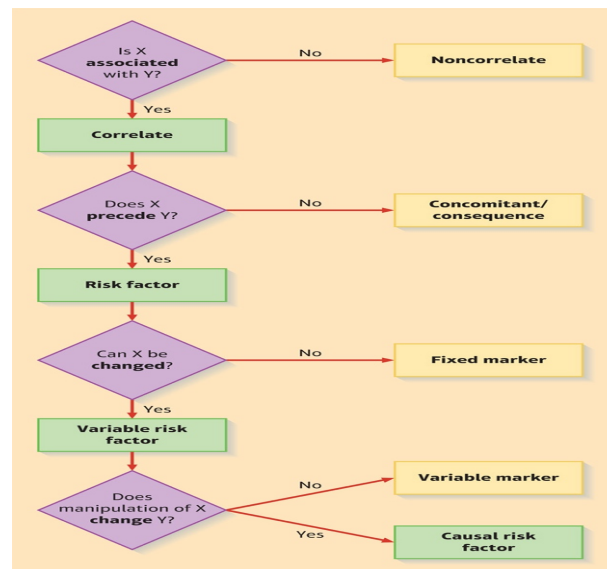
Risk factors & Causes



- **Risk Factor:** An agent or exposure that increases risk
 - Must precede the outcome
 - Can be used to divide the population into high- and low-risk groups
 - Probabilistic: some people in the high-risk group may not develop disorder, some people in the low-risk group may develop the disorder

Figure 3.1 From Correlation to Causation

Virtually all areas of science share an interest in understanding how variables are related to each other. Are they correlated? Does one actually cause the other? This helpful diagram created by Kraemer and colleagues (1997) is designed to help determine the status of potential causal factors. To use it, ask yourself: "Can it be shown that. . . ." Then start at the top-left box and work your way down.



Types of Causal Factors



Etiology: Causal pattern of abnormal behavior

Necessary cause (X)

Sufficient cause (Y)

Contributory cause

Types of Causal Factors



It is important to distinguish between

Distal causal factors

Proximal (immediate)
risk factors

Reinforcing
contributory cause

Causal Factors

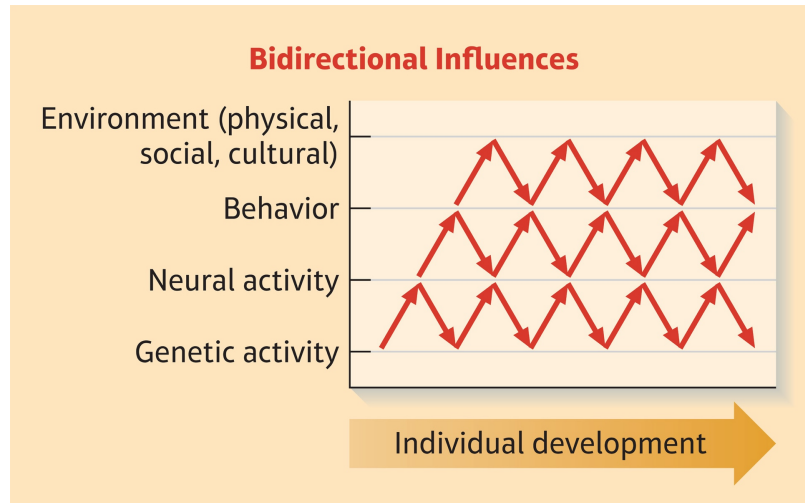


Figure 3.4 Bidirectional Influences
 A systems view of psychobiological development.
 (Adapted from Gilbert Gottlieb, 1992, *Individual Development and Evolution: The Genesis of Novel Behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press. Reprinted by permission of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.)

Types of Causal Factors



Mental Disorders have different courses:

Congenital, chronic, unremitting

Autism

Late-onset, chronic, unremitting

Alzheimer's

Episodic

Depression

Causal Factors



Identifying causal factors for mental disorders difficult because:

- Multiple interacting factors
- Bidirectional relationships
- Often can't ethically use experimental methods
- Latency from cause to disorder is unclear, may vary by disease course

Causal Factors



Why look at causal factors?

- Help professionals organize observations into a model that tells us what to target in treatment
- Help us move toward perspectives & etiological models
 - [Perspectives](#): theoretical constructs devised to orient psychologists in the study of abnormal behavior

Etiological Models



What?

How?

Biopsychosocial Models

Diathesis-Stress Models

Biopsychosocial Models



Thought Experiment:

Suppose you are a mad (maybe even evil) scientist who is designing a recipe guaranteed to make a person depressed. What would you do?

Biological

Psychological

Sociocultural

Diathesis-Stress Models



Diathesis: Relatively distal necessary or contributory cause that is not sufficient to cause disorder

Stress: Response of individual to taxing demands

Diathesis-stress models: Combination of diathesis and stress to cause disorder

Diathesis-Stress Models



Protective factors:
Influences that modify person's response



Resilience: Ability to successfully adapt to very difficult circumstances

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