Review Article

Mental Health Disorders and Their Biological Underpinnings

Muhammad Akram^{1*}, Mohammed Khudhair Hasan², Marium Ahsan³, Ho Soonmin⁴

¹Department of Eastern Medicine, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

²University of Al Manara College of Pharmacy, Iraq.

³Department of Eastern Medicine, Superior University Lahore, Pakistan.

⁴Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, INTI International University, Putra Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, MALAYSIA.

¹Corresponding Author: makram_0451@hotmail.com

Received: 03 March 2025 Revised: 09 June 2025 Accepted: 31 July 2025 Published: 30 August 2025

Abstract - Mental health disorders are an important global health problem affecting millions in the population, regardless of age, sex or ethnicity. Alterations in mood, cognition, behavior, and perception are well-documented aspects of these diseases and conditions. Emerging evidence shows that genetics is critical to the onset and expression of mental disorders, pointing to the fact that, while a complex interaction of genetic, environmental, and psychosocial factors is involved in their onset and course, the mind is ultimately the product of a walnut-sized structure buried deep in an animal's head. Focusing on key areas such as genetics, neurochemistry, neuroanatomy, and neuroplasticity, we seek to review the molecular basis of mental health disorders. We have known for some time that genetic factors make a person more susceptible to mental health issues. Family and twin research studies show that many mental disorders, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, are heritable, although the general conclusion is that it is not a unitary abnormal gene, but rather multiple mutations at various genes are responsible for the high prevalence of any of the common psychiatric disorders, including major depressive disorders. Although the exact pathways remain complex and multifactorial, more refined molecular genetic techniques have now implicated several candidate genes in mental illness. Stress, trauma, drug misuse and other environmental factors can interact with genetic predispositions to influence how these genes are expressed and increase the likelihood of mental health problems. Chemical Balance – Neuro Another critical element of the molecular machinery that anchors mental health issues is a balance between the chemicals in your brain (neurochemicals). These chemical messengers — called neurotransmitters — help neurons talk to each other and are key to regulating behavior, emotion and thinking. Many psychiatric disorders have been associated with the imbalance of neurotransmitter systems, including glutamate, serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine.

Keywords - Anxiety disorders, Depression, Genetic predisposition, Human and illness, Psychotherapy, Public health, Structural brain changes.

1. Introduction

Mental health conditions are a variety of conditions that affect the mood, thinking and behavior of an individual. Many people have psychological problems occasionally. Yet, a mental health concern becomes a mental disorder when continuing signs and symptoms result in frequent distress and interfere with his/her ability to function. A mental disorder can make it too hard to make someone miserable, and can cause problems in life, such as in school, in the workplace, and in relationships with family and friends. Mental health providers usually conduct interviews with patients to gather information from them, to ask them about their symptoms, how long they have been lasting, and how severe they are. The expert may often turn to the relatives themselves for information on the patient to have a fuller view. A doctor might perform a physical examination and discuss a person's

medical history to help exclude other causes of symptoms [1]. Mental health practitioners evaluate symptoms to diagnose mental illness. Mental health professionals agree that it is important to study people over the long term, to understand both what it means to have a mental illness and what it does to a person's life, despite the useful information the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 4th edition, (DSM-IV) provides for making a diagnosis of a mental illness. It is a valuable resource for clinicians in mental health and others wanting to understand mental disorders. It creates standard criteria to define the various disorders, lists the signs a patient would need to have for the diagnosis of each condition, and includes supplemental information such as how common and how genetically linked the disorders are. In this work, several topics such as anxiety disorders, structural brain changes, psychotherapy, genetic predisposition, and depression will be

reported. Lastly, artificial intelligence aids in diagnosing, treating and understanding mental health diseases will be highlighted.

2. Literature Reviews

Unlike diagnosing some diseases, doctors cannot culture certain germs or do blood tests to identify a mental health disorder. Until then, mental health clinicians will have to diagnose based on symptoms, even though scientists will eventually develop new physiological tests for mental illness Symptom dissection involves understanding the development and potential role of a patient's symptoms. It is a method of gathering information about when symptoms developed, how patients attribute them, what patients think about them and what effect they have on an individual's overall health. This evaluation helps to identify the cause of a patient's problems and to determine the best solution. A coach will work with a client who is experiencing symptoms of mental illness to define his or her symptoms, determine how long the symptoms have been present, and determine how they are impacting the client's life. The distinction of mental health issues is more subjective than other chronic diseases [3]. For instance, there is no X-ray that can detect whether a child has a predisposition for bipolar disorder or depression, or even a blood test for it [4].

A blood test is a laboratory analysis done to test all the elements present in the blood, including the cells, proteins, and chemicals, to determine a patient's overall health and help detect potential health problems. Such tests help medical staff evaluate the performance of the organ, robustness of the immune system and other aspects of the patient's health. Xrays are a type of electromagnetic radiation used for imaging body structures, especially for imaging bones. These instruments currently offer a rapid, painless scan that uses radiation to make images of bones and surrounding tissues. Experts differ over the degree to which this biological approach can be taken; however, new genetic and neuroimaging methods are aiding a greater understanding of the biology of mental illness [5]. Before the release of DSM-III, the RDC was even difficult to diagnose, and mental disorders were vaguely defined [6]. Rather, the use of the Research Diagnostic Criteria (RDC) was the predominant approach in the development of DSM-III, not operationally, but in the DSM itself.

DSM-III deferred to the RDC as a template for its diagnostic criteria, which consisted of feature-based clinical descriptions, while introducing the concept of polythetic criteria, where a patient could still qualify for a category without exhibiting all its defining features. Systemic bias is when a process naturally leans towards certain outcomes. Usually, this term refers to human systems like organizations. Relation to other types of bias. Systemic bias is related to and includes conceptual overlap with institutional bias and with structural bias, and these terms are often used interchangeably.

Systematic bias in the groups recruited by different methods can be evaluated, and the probability of sampling each participant group can be computed through recording the method of recruitment [7].

Descriptive classification is a classification technique for organizing data, often called data classification, that is common in biological sciences for the identification of plants and animals. They involve collecting data, looking at it, and then sorting the subjects based on observed characteristics. This technique is most helpful in understanding different groups' attributes, behaviors and reactions about a certain event. There can be no taxonomy of mental disease not constructed around a specific viewpoint, for "there is no phenomenon (such as no mental symptom) which is, in itself, a psychosis or neurosis". Symptom-based mental health categories focus on the organization of people by the numbers and intensity of symptoms. This technique is applicable for analyzing, diagnosing or treating and helps identify pattems or subsets within larger diseases. Indeed, these classifications do not adequately take into account various biological parameters of mental illnesses, including brain circuitry and neurobiological pathways. [8].

3. Anxiety Disorders

Some fear can be helpful on some occasions, and anxiety is a natural emotion. It may assist in warning his/her of threats and supportive in focus and preparedness [9]. Anticipating being concerned is referred to as anxiety and is most strongly associated with tense muscles and avoidance. Usually, a fight or flight response is associated with speech disability, which may impede social interaction, but children with this fear may flee danger or stay to fight. The fight-orflight reaction is a physical response to a perceived threat—a way of preparing the body to either fight or flee.

It is induced by the sympathetic nervous system and consists of a cascade of hormonal and neural responses. This response is supposed to protect the individual from harm by increasing alertness, pulse, breathing and muscle tenseness. The systems that control affect have been alternatively associated with anxiety and aggression. Sullivan et al [10] found that problems in anger management were a significant predictor of aggression in a sample of urban adolescents. Consistent with this, Suveg and colleagues [11] found that deficits in emotion regulation fully mediated the link between early behavioral inhibition and anxiety symptoms in a sample of emerging adults. Research showed that anxiety and aggression are associated with emotion regulation problems [12]. Extending this line of reasoning suggests that problems in emotion regulation led to abnormalities in the fight or flight system, which may be expressed as anxiety, aggression or both. The Emotional regulation appears to be different depending on the functions of aggression. Reactive aggression has been linked with emotional dysregulation (shields) but not predictive aggression [13].

Among these mechanisms, one of the most important effects of the fight or flight response includes reactivity, considering that the intensity of the emotional experience evoked by an aversive signal will be determinant to the magnitude of the behavioral response [14]. Elevated reactivity has concomitantly been related to anxiety [15] and aggression. Although responsive aggression and anxiety are linked with higher emotional reactivity [16], there are studies demonstrating that anxiety and aggression are related to provoking emotional responses. Stadler et al. [17] found that emotional arousal, as opposed to physiological arousal, was an important cause of aggression in 9-14-year-old children. Carthy and colleagues [18] found a similar response pattern in children with generalized anxiety disorder, social phobia, and/or separation anxiety disorder. They found that in comparison to non-anxious children, all three groups of anxious children reported significantly greater levels of fear, as well as giving heightened fear ratings in response to the ambiguous task, which had the potential to be interpreted in a threatening manner.

Indeed, there is evidence that the pathology in fight-orflight behaviors is linked with more generalized negative cognitive and emotional symptoms [19]. Even further, Beck and colleagues [20] stated that negative thoughts are associated with anxious or aggressive behaviors. Fight or flight response (the main experience response) can be expressed as anger or fear, with the core anxious thoughts versus the aggressive thoughts being considered as fear or anger. Support for this notion in a group of young (7-16 years old) volunteers was recently provided by Schnieringa et along [21]. Their results did show thoughts predicting anxiety or aggressive behavior. Thought of social threat was the strongest predictor of anxiety, and thought of hostility or aggression. Remarkably, however, this general model does not hold for forms of aggression. The content specificity hypothesis predicts that aggressive behavior should be associated with hostile cognitions rather than with fearful cognitions. However, Loudin and colleagues [22] examined the relationships among relational aggression and social anxiety cognitions.

A second cognitive factor that might impact heavily upon the decision of fight or flight is a perception of control. Perceived Control Weems and colleagues [23] describe perceived control as an individual's perception of the degree to which he/she can influence situational factors or events. In addition, reliance on perceived control often includes more specific measures of perceived control and actual control, and people's perceptions of ability do not necessarily correspond to their real abilities. It is actually very easy to apply the concept of perceived control with respect to the fight-or-flight system. Studies of content specificity suggest that separate thoughts are associated with either anger or anxiety, and social information processing studies suggest that different processes are involved in the transformation of those thoughts

into either anxious or aggressive behavior. Therefore, notions of control, such as social information processing systems, predetermine a male to be fight or flight oriented. Research on the distinction between the regulation of aggression and the regulation of anxiety seems to support such a differentiation. Researchers agree that overcontrol or undercontrol of control over control can cause anxiety, but do not agree on whether this is dependent on competence or, rather, contingency. Considering this, Brendgen et al. [24] found that only significant overestimation and underestimation in social competence and very aggressive behavior are associated.

Here, it is basically an eruption that appears conditional, not anxiety. Scott et al [25] empirically examined this model in a sample of 203 children (mean age 11 years, age range 6-17 years). They found that for children who reported high actual control, but low perceived control, it was more due to anxiety and depression than aggression. Youth with low actual control but high perceived control, in contrast, demonstrated more aggression than anxiety or depression.

Worry or anxiety has interfered with daily activities, at least, for the past six months. Extreme fear or anxiety about potential separation from those to whom the person is attached is characteristic of separation anxiety disorder and interferes with the individual's ability to work [26]. Someone who is diagnosed with separation anxiety disorder in Vietnam also has dreams where they are separated from loved one, they do not want to leave their home or house, or they constantly worry they will lose those who are closest. Physical pain experiences often develop during childhood and can persist until old age [27]. Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is a common comorbid mental health condition in both children and adults. It causes a person to get extremely upset when away from a major attachment figure or when anticipating such separation. The fear and panic are too much and are not developmentally appropriate.

Suffering from separation anxiety disorder as an adult may be manifested as experiencing separation anxiety in adulthood, or as recurrence of features of childhood, adolescent or adult separation anxiety attacks. Large-scale clinical research shows that the adult form of separation anxiety disorder is associated with marked levels of disability. Second, the presence of adult separation anxiety disorders in people with anxiety disorders seemed to predict a less favorable outcome for cognitive behavior therapy.

Future research may question the logic of retaining the original separation anxiety disorder CSWE criteria, although there is an emerging body of evidence to support reasons for not retaining the childhood onset qualifier. There is a clear need for the development and evaluation of treatments that are applicable to separation anxiety disorders in adults, and to train clinicians in the identification and management of the disorders.

Children with selective mutism can speak in settings where speech is necessary (such as home) but not in settings where it is not (such as school). They do talk to their own family at home, but usually not to close friends or grandparents. Sometimes conditions use gestures or nonverbal and non-vocal means (such as pointing, writing, growling). Verbal communication is the art of delivering one's ideas, thoughts and information with spoken words. It is a fundamental aspect of human communication and involves both the sender and receiver, who often switch roles. Good spoken communication requires clarity, appropriate word choice and a chance to convey the right tone. Non-verbal communication means transmitting a message in a wordless manner by using facial expressions, body movements, gestures and vocal tone. It is an integral part of the way humans communicate with each other, often adding context that words themselves cannot achieve, and in some cases, emotions and messages that no words can express on their own. Academic problems and social isolation are two other negative school outcomes that could come about due to nonverbal expressiveness [28].

High rates of social anxiety, very high shyness and concerns about social embarrassment are also typical in children with SM. At the same time, they have ordinary language abilities. While selective mutism usually presents itself before age five, it may not be identified until the child begins attending school [29]. The first step in ensuring your symptoms are not due to a medical issue is to see a doctor. Tragically, many people with the disease are undiagnosed and untreated, and, despite the availability of effective therapies, patients with anxiety disorders often do not seek treatment [30].

4. Structural Brain Changes

Too much gaming can impede social development and lead to less face-to-face social interaction and possible social isolation. It can also affect academic success and other responsibilities, and lead to mental health problems and relationship issues. The lack of social interaction due to too much gaming could have long-lasting social consequences. A kid with a multiplication problem will not learn social skills, which will hamper his ability to form and maintain a relationship in college and beyond. Harmful impacts of pathological video gaming could be manyfold and might include negative social and psychological consequences [31]. Twenty-nine "pathological" violent video game players, who played an average of 4.7 hours a day, and age-matched controls completed several questionnaires looking at psychological health, internet addiction, aggression, empathy, and hostility. T1-weighted MRI and DTI are two separate MRI techniques to visualize the brain and other tissues. The T1weighted images provide anatomic data, demonstrating tissues including the gray and white matter with different signals. In contrast, Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI) utilizes the diffusion weighted sequences to show the direction of water

movement [32], which in turn depicts the structure and orientation of the white matter tracts.

Aggressiveness, anger, self-esteem, and the degree of Internet addiction were all correlated with the gray and white matter differences to full-range scores of the ER-40 (T), which included participants of the traditional emotion recognition test, to test whether a decline in emotion recognition with age was associated with atrophy in emotion-related brain regions. Emotion recognition is the capacity to recognize and understand emotions presented in diverse types of clues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and speech. It is an area that is fundamental to human-computer interaction, communication and social behavior. It is anticipated that people's emotional recognition abilities will reduce with age [33].

Emotional literacy tends to decline as we age. Research also indicates that older adults may have more difficulty recognising basic emotions, especially when delivered through facial expressions, vocal tones and body cues. This reduction is observed in recognition of emotions such as sadness, fear, disgust, surprise and joy [34]. There is also research suggesting that older adults may find it more difficult to recognize certain discrete negative emotions, such as anger. Some studies suggest that older adults might attend less to the eyes and more to the mouth when interpreting emotions from facial expression, which could hamper their ability to identify emotions that are more accurately identified in the eyes. Context influences emotion perception, and older persons may have difficulty in utilizing contextual information to accurately interpret emotions [35].

5. Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is a type of therapy that uses psychological methods to help patients overcome mental health problems and emotional barriers [36]. It is also known as talk therapy or psychological counseling. Interpersonal psychotherapy is an empirically tested time-limited psychological treatment developed in the 1907s for the treatment of major depression. Since then, multiple studies have shown that IPT is efficacious in the treatment of depression, that it may be as or more efficacious than other forms of psychotherapy in the treatment of depression, that its use can forestall relapse following a successful treatment for depression, that it can prevent the onset of major depression in cases where subthreshold depression emerges, and that it is also effective with specific population subgroups, such as adolescents, older adults, and patients. Interpersonal psychotherapy focuses on problematic life events such as life changes and social disconnection [37]. Many interventions have been found to help their patients make connections to social support and improve the quality of their relationships. The tasks of the initial phase include creating a therapeutic alliance, conducting a psychiatric assessment, as well as a comprehensive social history and interpersonal inventory, providing psychoeducation, instilling hope, and choosing an interpersonal mode. Specific manualized treatment guidelines for this stage are introduced. A third stage is entered once success has been achieved, which involves consolidating gains and learning flexible social strategies and strategies for avoiding relapse [38].

Symptom reduction may be considered the main purpose and outcome of psychotherapy. It is certainly the symptom reduction that is the focus for outcome studies, particularly those which are blinded randomized trials [39] and patients in qualitative studies also identify it as being one of the main outcomes that can be sought. Outside of researchers and patients, decreasing symptomatology is a main goal for other stakeholders (such as therapists), although that may depend on the model they are trained in. These findings powerfully support the concept that psychotherapies are highly active for most psychiatric disorders when the removal of symptoms is taken to be the primary outcome [40]. However, these findings have been criticized to be overoptimistic, as publication bias, low quality, and validity of many of the trials, threats such as researcher allegiance (including conviction of an intervention's superiority and a higher validity of the underlying theory of change associated to the treatment) mean that these trial results may not be fully reliable. Where most studies concentrated on the short-term, the long-term was largely unexplored. And there are indications that a specific type of control condition, such as a waiting-list control, could overestimate the effect of treatment.

Another separate level of goals and outcomes of psychotherapies is those defined by the patient. Patients generally ask for treatment to manage not simply their symptoms but also a range of other personal difficulties, like – for example – getting back to work, solving intrapersonal conflict, being a better parent, or getting into fewer disputes with their partner or boss [41]. Addressing these patient concerns may be viewed as a goal of therapy. Although the specific questions have not been studied to the same extent as symptom relief over time, there is a rich tradition of research that has been examining these questions since the early 1960s.

Several standard assessments have been developed to investigate the important goals and outcomes from the perspectives of the patients. The differentiation between nomothetic and idiographic outcome measures is crucial in this respect. Most of the others are nomothetic, where each thing in the set of things that constitute the measure is possessed by all people to a degree, and it is the aim of the measure to locate the patient on that dimension. The idiographic measures, on the other hand, rely on the specific characteristics and viewpoints of the patient [42]. Clearly, idiographic measures are more relevant for targets and outcomes of therapies that are specified by patients.

There is a growing consensus that psychotherapy studies and other interventions for mental disorders should not only focus on symptoms of disorders as targets and endpoints but should also consider the broader concept of quality of life [43]. However, the exact meaning of quality of life is not clear. It is also considered a multidimensional construct, involving physical, psychological and social facets of health. It includes many dimensions such as social relations, physical functions, mental health performance and role performance [44]. In the majority of psychotherapist outcomes research, quality of life is measured with self-report instrumentation. There is a significant body of evidence on the effect of psychotherapy practice on self-reported quality of life among different psychiatric disorders.

A few studies are concerned with the influence of psychotherapies on QL in a broader sense. For example, several meta-analyses reported that psychotherapeutic treatments of depression had effects not only on depressive symptoms but also on social support [45]. A small metaanalysis also provides some evidence that psychotherapy for mothers with depression may have beneficial effects on parent functioning, parent-child interaction, and mental health in children. These metal analyses indeed revealed a substantial association between the effects on psychopathology and different qualities of life. As regards examination of decline rates in psychotherapy studies, individual patient data metaanalyses are superior. That is, the rate of deterioration across different diseases is typically small, and the power of a randomized trial is often not sufficient to detect these differences.

In IPD meta-analyses, the raw data of different trials are collected and put together as one database. Because the datasets that are generated are usually very large, they have a great deal of statistical power to assess rare events such as decline [46]. Supportive counseling, supportive psychotherapy or support therapy is an approach to therapy or counseling that helps individuals face difficulties by empathizing with them and addressing the map of social and emotional support. There is an emphasis on building a relationship of trust with the patient and providing psychological support and coping strategies. The therapist listens without judging the client.

The counselor helps patients develop plans for dealing with problems and achieving goals. The coach supports patients with difficult feelings, including stress and grief. Counseling services may support those who are having a difficult time or feel stressed [47]. It can be used to treat psychological disorders as well. Exposure therapy is a form of behavior therapy used to treat anxiety. It involves gradually exposing the individual to the stimulus they fear or the situation that triggers anxiety, in a safe and controlled environment. The coach wants to help decondition the anxiety that is responding to patients, including developing a hierarchy of fear situations in conjunction with the patient, starting with the least anxiety-provoking exposure(s) and proceeding to more challenging exposures. Exposure therapy

therapists might implement a variety of techniques. Imaginal exposure involves the individual summoning up images of the scenario they fear happening in circuitous detail.

Exposure is the treatment, and here are examples of what the different fears could look like as exposures: e.g., with a fear of vomiting, the client would not be recommended to drink ipecac as an exposure. Or instead, they would have patients write a story that includes what those people might imagine happening if they were to vomit (probably in a public place). In vivo exposure involves exposure to an object of fear or a fear-eliciting situation in real life. Suppose a teenager is terrified of separation from their parents. In that case, it will involve a very gradual exposure to learning to be away from them in other situations, with the help of a therapist and permission from the parents. Interoceptive exposure provides a way to challenge a feared physical sensation. It is most often used to treat panic attacks. The therapist could cue the patient to do jumping jacks for one minute to raise the heart rate [48]. The patient will eventually realise that this is all harmless and not a heart attack. Virtual reality exposure is a novel approach to help patients get in touch with their fears with the help of virtual reality setups. If your patients are a fraid of flying, they may benefit from watching videos of people flying before their vacation, which involves an airplane flight.

6. Genetic Predisposition

Personalized genetic testing has been aggressively marketed to consumers, and it is increasingly so now that genotyping technology has become extremely inexpensive post-Human Genome Project [49]. Now, for the first time, an array of genetic variants associated with traits — including ancestry, intelligence, athletic ability, or a predisposition to certain diseases — can all be tested for genetic risk. The tests are among the swelling commerce and are available to consumers online and outside the health care system. Customers of the personal genomics market (a market that currently can be claimed to be mainly the Direct-To-Consumer (DTC) personal genomics market) buy genotypic data expressed in categories of relative risk and probability as likelihood. Genetic products, of course, would be quite different because testing has been marketed to consumers, in part because the cost of genotyping technology has plummeted since the completion of the Human Genome Project. Now, there is a long list of genetic variants associated with traits that are both bad (illnesses and cancer) and good (ancestry, I.Q., athleticism, and even risk-taking). They are part of a growing market for tests provided to customers online and away from the medical system.

By rendering likelihood into interpretation, providers of personal genetic information services for consumers in the Direct-To-Consumer (DTC) personal genomics market provide easy access for a public that, in turn, becomes inscribed into political debates about privacy, therapeutic and personal value and access. And debates on geneticizing social

identity and the importance of generalizing from individual differences to group membership have centered on personal DTC genetic testing. Traditional models of genetic testing are being shifted by open access genetics testing; as testing moves from a health provider-driven model to a customer-driven model, it creates new ethical, legal, and social questions regarding who is qualified to interpret genetic data and for what purposes.

Among the controversies was the suggestion of the existence of perhaps genetically based, family-specific susceptibility to certain diseases. According to the concept of the 'genetic exception', moral issues around genetics differ from other issues [50], and as it is a test performed at infancy, the test should be able to designate a person's condition for several late-onset disorders, as Enuresis has been noted to have a genetic contribution.

7. Depression

Depressive disorder (commonly known as depression) is widespread. It involves a low mood or reduced pleasure or interest in activities for very long periods [51]. Depression is not the same as normal mood fluctuations and emotions caused by daily life. It can touch all aspects of life, from connections with family, friends and the community. It can lead to or compound problems in schools and at jobs. Depression can affect anyone. People who have been abused, faced major losses or other traumatic incidents are more likely to become depressed.

A physical examination is also useful to evaluate for medical conditions that resemble depression [52], including substance use disorders, neurologic pathology, vitamin deficiencies, and endocrine abnormalities. The exam may include imaging and diagnostic testing as part of medical screening. When diagnosing the causes of a patient's condition, the examining doctor will evaluate each of these considerations and discuss an appropriate plan of treatment.

Brain chemistry may contribute to a person's depression and may factor into their treatment [53]. Neurochemistry Nervous system chemistry, or neurochemistry, is the field of study that determines how chemicals within the nervous system, such as proteolysis of cell cycle proteins, work and are altered by disease. It focuses on how brain activity and behavior are influenced by chemicals like neurotransmitters and different molecules. Naturally occurring chemicals dopamine and serotonin are important in the regulation of mood, emotion and cognition. Antidepressants are medications used to treat depression and other mental health conditions, including anxiety. They work by influencing the brain's chemical messengers, or neurotransmitters, that are involved in regulating mood. Antidepressants increase levels of various neurotransmitters in the brain, such as serotonin and norepinephrine, which are believed to be associated with mood and emotions. They help to restore an equilibrium of

these neurotransmitters, which may have been disturbed in people with depression.

Antidepressants might therefore be recommended. These are not tranquilizers, stimulants or sedatives. They do not create addiction. The complete response to an antidepressant is not seen for about two to three months, although there may be slight improvement within the first week or two. Your psychiatrist or another medical professional may suggest a different type of antidepressant, a different dosage of the one you are taking or the addition of a new medication if there is little or no improvement after a few weeks [54]. Other classes of psychiatric medications, such as mood stabilizers, may be helpful in some situations. Be sure to discuss any concerns about prescription or any adverse effects that you may feel with the healthcare provider.

8. Artificial Intelligence for Mental Healthcare

Artificial Intelligence (AI) aids in diagnosing, treating and understanding mental health diseases. Artificial intelligence can also improve access to healthcare and fill in treatment gaps. "Benefits of AI in mental health would be improving access to treatment, especially for those who have limited access to traditional treatments." Furthermore, AI can help reduce the burden on human support for the more complex needs and can also help lower barriers to helpseeking [55]. Charter, published by Learned Publishing, and there is another Charter issue related to AI in mental health, which is the possibility of bias and the concept of fairness. In addition, AI systems should consider the privacy and security of patient data. At the end of the day, AI-driven interventions will balance automation with the human touch. AI can assist in the early recognition of those who might be at risk of mental health problems. AI does this by learning patterns in massive amounts of data. AI is applied to a wide variety of clinical aid tools [56]. Clinically validated software solutions derived from evidence as digital tools represent a kind of digital therapeutics whose potential is significant for care improvement. Furthermore, AI-enabled wearables can monitor symptoms and provide feedback about patient performance to both clinician and patient. This new technology offers an opportunity for enhanced real-time symptom monitoring, adherence to the therapeutic skills

suited for the incident, and assessment of outcomes [57]. Lastly, AI can be employed for monitoring therapy, supplying practitioners with real-time information about arising threats or other major problems. It can also help monitor adherence to an intervention protocol and may suggest ways to improve or modify interventions.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many biological factors in mental illnesses, and their understanding must take into consideration the complex interplay between genetic, neurochemical, neuroanatomical, and neuroplastic aspects. Recent studies have revealed the roles played by genetic predispositions, structural disturbances in the brain, changes in the systems controlled by neurotransmitters, which are among those related to anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and depression, in the emergence and progression of these states. Understanding these basic mechanisms is key to developing better targeted and effective treatments that address the root causes of mental health problems rather than the symptoms. Environmental factors (e.g. stress, trauma, and lifestyle) surely modify biological pathways and increase the likelihood of developing mental illness, but genetic components provide a foundation for susceptibility. As we continue to advance in our understanding of the biological underpinnings of mental illness, the potential for tailored treatments that are more effective and precise would increase. In addition, recognizing the biological basis of mental illness helps to reduce stigma and to promote a more empathic and evidence-based paradigm of mental health care. The discovery of treatment options, improved recovery outcomes, and a better understanding of the multifaceted nature of mental health diseases are all reliant on further investigation into the subject.

Funding Statement

The author (Ho SM) was financially supported by INTI International University, Malaysia.

Acknowledgments

This research work was financially supported by INTI International University (Ho SM).

References

- [1] Richard A. Dey, James Rainville, and Daniel L. Kent, "What can the History and Physical Examination Tell Us About Low Back Pain?," *JAMA*, vol. 268, no. 6, pp. 760-765, 1992. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [2] Shitij Kapur, Anthony Phillips, and Thomas R. Insel, "Why has it taken so Long for Biological Psychiatry to Develop Clinical Tests and What to Do about it?," *Molecular Psychiatry*, vol. 17, no. 12, pp. 1174-1179, 2012. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [3] Anita L. Stewart et al., "Functional Status and Well-Being of Patients with Chronic Conditions: Results from the Medical Outcomes Study," *JAMA*, vol. 262, no. 7, pp. 907-913, 1989. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [4] Benjamin H. Natelson, Your Symptoms are Real: What to do When Your Doctor Says Nothing is Wrong, Turner Publishing, 2009. [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [5] Jes Olesen et al., "Consensus Document on European Brain Research," *Journal of Neurology*, *Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, vol. 77, no. suppl 1, pp. i1-i49, 2006. [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]

- [6] Lee Anna Clark et al., "Three Approaches to Understanding and Classifying Mental Disorder: ICD-11, DSM-5, and the National Institute of Mental Health's Research Domain Criteria (RDoC)," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 72-145, 2017. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [7] Lisa Newington, and Alison Metcalfe, "Factors Influencing Recruitment to Research: Qualitative Study of the Experiences and Perceptions of Research Teams," *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 1-11, 2014. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [8] Gunter Schumann et al., "Stratified Medicine for Mental Disorders," *European Neuropsychopharmacology*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 5-50, 2014. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [9] Anupam Sah, and Nicolas Singewald, "The (neuro) Inflammatory System in Anxiety Disorders and PTSD: Potential Treatment Targets," Pharmacology & Therapeutics, vol. 269, pp. 1-24, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [10] Terri N. Sullivan et al., "Associations between Sadness and Anger Regulation Coping, Emotional Expression, and Physical and Relational Aggression among Urban Adolescents," *Social Development*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 30-51, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [11] Cynthia Suveg et al., "The Emotion Dysregulation Model of Anxiety: A Preliminary Path Analytic Examination," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, vol. 24, no. 8, pp. 924-930, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [12] Amelia Aldao, and Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, "Specificity of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategies: A Transdiagnostic Examination," *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, vol. 48, no. 10, pp. 974-983, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [13] Paula J. Fite et al., "Reactive and Proactive Aggression in Adolescent Males: Examining Differential Outcomes 10 Years Later in Early Adulthood," *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 141-157, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [14] Pedro Avero, and Manuel G. Calvo, "Emotional Reactivity to Social-Evaluative Stress: Gender Differences in Response Systems Concordance," *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 155-170, 1999. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [15] Tal Carthy et al., "Emotional Reactivity and Cognitive Regulation in Anxious Children," *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 384-393, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [16] David J. Kolko et al., "Internalizing Symptoms and Affective Reactivity in Relation to the Severity of Aggression in Clinically Referred, Behavior - Disordered Children," *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, vol. 16, pp. 745-759, 2007. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [17] Christina Stadler et al., "Effects of Provocation on Emotions and Aggression: An Experimental Study with Aggressive Children," Swiss Journal of Psychology, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 117-124, 2006. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [18] Tal Carthy et al., "Patterns of Emotional Reactivity and Regulation in Children with Anxiety Disorders," *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 23-36, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [19] Sophie C. Reid, Karen Salmon, and Peter F. Lovibond, "Cognitive Biases in Childhood Anxiety, Depression, and Aggression: Are they Pervasive or Specific?," *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 531-549, 2006. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [20] Aaron T. Beck, Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders, International Universities Press, 1976. [Google Scholar]
- [21] Carolyn Schniering, and Ronald Rapee, "The Relationship between Automatic thoughts and Negative Emotions in Children and Adolescents: A Test of the Cognitive Content-Specificity Hypothesis," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. 113, no. 3, pp. 464-470, 2004. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [22] Jesse L. Loudin, Alexandra Loukas, and Sheri Robinson, "Relational Aggression in College Students: Examining the Roles of Social Anxiety and Empathy," *Aggressive Behavior*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 430-439, 2003. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [23] Carl F. Weems, and Wendy K. Silverman, "An Integrative Model of Control: Implications for Understanding Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation in Childhood Anxiety," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 91, no. 2-3, pp. 113-124, 2006. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [24] Mara Brendgen et al., "Is there a Dark Side of Positive Illusions? Overestimation of Social Competence and Subsequent Adjustment in Aggressive and Nonaggressive Children," *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 305-320, 2004. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [25] Brandon G. Scott, and Carl F. Weems, "Patterns of Actual and Perceived Control: Are Control Profiles Differentially Related to Internalizing and Externalizing Problems in Youth?," *Anxiety, Stress & Coping: An International Journal*, vol. 23, no. 5, pp. 515-528, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [26] Jorge Grimaldos et al., "Augmented Reality Exposure Treatments in Anxiety and Related Disorders: A Systematic Review," *Internet Interventions*, vol. 39, pp. 1-11, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [27] Siyu Zhou et al., "Moderators of Cognitive and Behaviour Therapies for Prevention and Treatment of Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Clinical Psychology Review*, vol. 116, pp. 1-15, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]

- [28] Stefan G. Hofmann, Chantal Kasch, and Andreas Reis, "Effect Sizes of Randomized-Controlled Studies of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Anxiety Disorders Over the Past 30 Years," *Clinical Psychology Review*, vol. 117, pp. 1-12, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [29] Charlotte Archer et al., "Beta-Blockers for the Treatment of Anxiety Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 368, pp. 90-99, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [30] Ronald C. Kessler et al., *Epidemiology of Anxiety Disorders*, Behavioral Neurobiology of Anxiety and its Treatment, 1st ed., Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, pp. 21-35, 2009. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [31] Xinxin Yang et al., "Efficacy and Acceptability of Brain Stimulation for Anxiety Disorders, OCD, and PTSD: A Systematic Review and Network Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 370, pp. 62-75, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [32] Erica Dall'Armellina et al., "Cardiac Diffusion-Weighted and Tensor Imaging: A Consensus Statement from the Special Interest Group of the Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance," *Journal of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 1-20, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [33] Adriano Yacubian Fernandes et al., "MR Diffusion Tensor Imaging Applied to the Spinal Cord of Patients with Neuropathic Pain Secondary to Herpes Zoster Infection," *Journal of Clinical Neuroscience*, vol. 130, 2024. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [34] Jie Zhu et al., "Diffusion-Weighted, Intravoxel Incoherent Motion, and Diffusion Kurtosis Tensor MR Imaging in Chronic Kidney Diseases: Correlations with Histology," *Magnetic Resonance Imaging*, vol. 106, pp. 1-7, 2024. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [35] Bruno Dietsche, Tilo Kircher, and Irina Falkenberg, "Structural Brain Changes in Schizophrenia at Different Stages of the Illness: A Selective Review of Longitudinal Magnetic Resonance Imaging Studies," *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 500-508, 2017. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [36] Linghan Sun et al., "Psychotherapies for Social Anxiety Disorder in Adults: A Systematic Review and Bayesian Network Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 378, pp. 301-319, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [37] Marisa Schurr et al., "Psychotherapy in Patients with Long/Post COVID A Systematic Review on the Feasibility, Acceptability, Safety, and Efficacy of Available and Emerging Interventions," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, vol. 190, pp. 1-12, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [38] Carolina Seybert et al., "Quality of Reporting on Psychological Interventions in Psychedelic Treatments: A Systematic Review," *The Lancet Psychiatry*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 54-66, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [39] Taylor Rogan, and Samuel T. Wilkinson, "The Role of Psychotherapy in the Management of Treatment-Resistant Depression," *Psychiatric Clinics*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 349-358, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [40] Priscila R. Toledo et al., "Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Treatment of Obesity: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 320, pp. 319-329, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [41] Nisha Giridharan et al., "Psychotherapy for Treatment-Resistant Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder," *Advances in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1-10, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [42] Michael Shapiro, "Psychodynamic Formulation and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy for Pediatric Anxiety Disorders," *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 559-572, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [43] Sia Pei Ling et al., "Role of Immunotherapy in the Treatment of Cancer: A Systematic Review," *Cancers*, vol. 14, no. 21, pp. 1-18, 2022. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [44] Michael Barkham, Wolfgang Lutz, and Louis G. Castonguay, *Bergin and Garfield's Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change*, 7th ed., John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1-848, 2021. [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [45] Yi Liu, Kathleen Calzone, and Lisa J. McReynolds, "Genetic Predisposition to Myelodysplastic Syndrome: Genetic Counseling and Transplant Implications," *Seminars in Hematology*, vol. 61, no. 6, pp. 370-378, 2024. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [46] Martin Hennenberg et al., "Genetic Predisposition to Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia: Where Do We Stand?" *European Urology Open Science*, vol. 70, pp. 154-157, 2024. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [47] Rongchang Guo et al., "Pulmonary Function, Genetic Predisposition, and the Risk of Cirrhosis: A Prospective Cohort Study," *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 185, pp. 1-24, 2024. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [48] Chengyong Jia et al., "Genetic Predisposition to Impaired Beta-Cell Function Modifies the Association between Serum Pyrethroid Levels and the Risk of Type 2 Diabetes: A Gene-Environment Interaction Study," *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety*, vol. 284, pp. 1-10, 2024. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [49] Gustavo de los Campos, Daniel Gianola, and David B. Allison, "Predicting Genetic Predisposition in Humans: The Promise of Whole-Genome Markers," *Nature Reviews Genetics*, vol. 11, no. 12, pp. 880-886, 2010. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [50] Yajuan Zhang et al., "Resting-State Functional Connectivity of the Raphe Nuclei in Major Depressive Disorder: A Multi-Site Study," *NeuroImage: Clinical*, vol. 37, pp. 1-10, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]

- [51] Xueru Li et al., "Climate Change and Depressive Disorders in Middle-Aged and Older People in China: A Quasi-Experimental Study," Journal of Environmental Psychology, vol. 92, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [52] Ji hyun An et al., "Association of Physical Activity with the Risk of Parkinson's Disease in Depressive Disorder: A Nationwide Longitudinal Cohort Study," *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, vol. 167, pp. 93-99, 2023. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [53] Eugene S. Paykel, "Basic Concepts of Depression," *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 279-289, 2008. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [54] El-Sayed Atlam et al., "Explainable Artificial Intelligence Systems for Predicting Mental Health Problems in Autistics," *Alexandria Engineering Journal*, vol. 117, pp. 376-390, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [55] Jamin Patel, Caitlin Hung, and Tarun Reddy Katapally, "Evaluating Predictive Artificial Intelligence Approaches used in Mobile Health Platforms to Forecast Mental Health Symptoms among Youth: A Systematic Review," *Psychiatry Research*, vol. 343, pp. 1-13, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [56] Anne-Kathrin Kleine et al., "AI-Enabled Clinical Decision Support Tools for Mental Healthcare: A Product Review," *Artificial Intelligence in Medicine*, vol. 160, pp. 1-11, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]
- [57] A. Natto Hatim et al., "Artificial Intelligence in Combating Antimicrobial Resistance," *Archives of Razi Institute*, vol. 80, no. 3, pp. 605-613, 2025. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] [Publisher Link]