

Introduction to Chronic Mental Illness

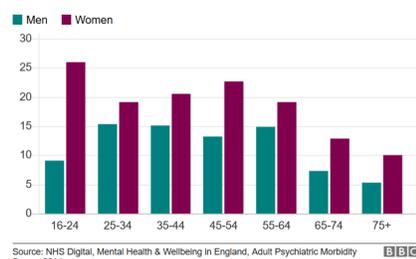
1. Chronic Mental Illness

Chronic mental illnesses are a group of mental disorders which affect emotions and thoughts. Disorders like schizophrenia, major depression and bipolar disorders belong to this group of health problems.

A World Health Organisation survey of leading causes of disability world-wide in 2004 shows mental illness appear in top 10.

Males		Female	
Cause	YLD (millions)	Cause	YLD (millions)
1. Unipolar depressive disorders	24.3	1. Unipolar depressive disorders	41.0
2. Alcohol use disorders	19.9	2. Reflective errors	14.0
3. Hearing loss, adult onset	14.1	3. Hearing loss, adult onset	13.3
4. Reflective errors	13.8	4. Cataracts	9.9
5. Schizophrenia	8.3	5. Osteoarthritis	9.5
6. Cataracts	7.9	6. Schizophrenia	8.0
7. Bipolar disorder	7.3	7. Anaemia	7.4
8. COPD	6.9	8. Bipolar disorder	7.1
9. Asthma	6.6	9. Birth asphyxia & birth trauma	6.9
10. Falls	6.3	10. Dementia	5.8

Proportion of people in England reporting mental illness symptoms in a single week

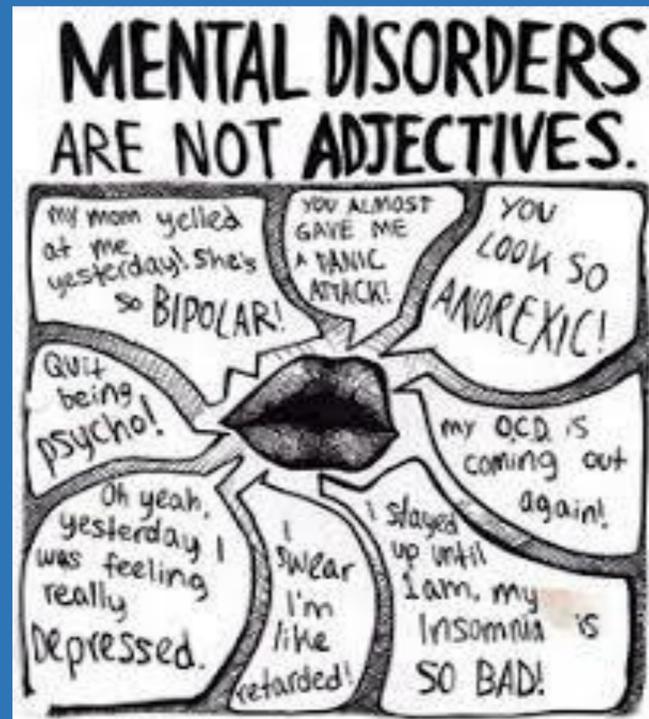


2. Mental Illness & Society

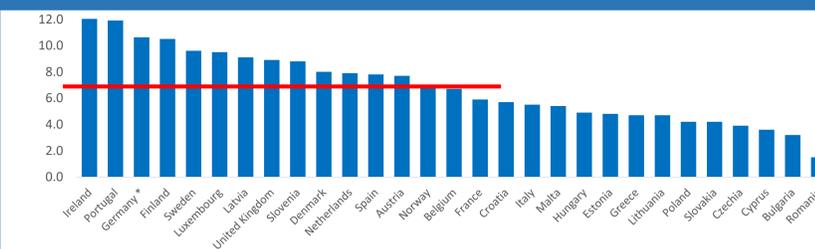
Throughout time mental illnesses, were not always considered health problems. The symptoms were described as insane, manic or melancholic. Nowadays things are different.

They are being recognised in all age groups, races and parts of the world resulted with better understanding of it as a medical issue.

Although the awareness of this problem is rising the stigma behind the mental disorders still exists.



- **Labeling** – Defining a person on the basis of their condition
- **Stereotyping** – Assuming that a person will behave in a certain way because of their condition
- **Seperating** – Adopting an *us and them* mentality towards people with a condition



Percentage of the population reported to be suffering from depression at any given time in EU countries (Eurostat, data from 2014)

3. Disorders

3.1 Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia affects 0.3-0.7% of people during their lifetime.

For diagnosis patients must display at least one of the following continuously or for a significant time over a month:

- **Delusions**
 - Fixed ideas or beliefs which are maintained even if you are presented with evidence that disproves or contradicts it.
- **Hallucinations**
 - Things which are perceived without an external stimulus
- **Disorganised speech.**
 - Suggestive of disorganised patterns of thinking

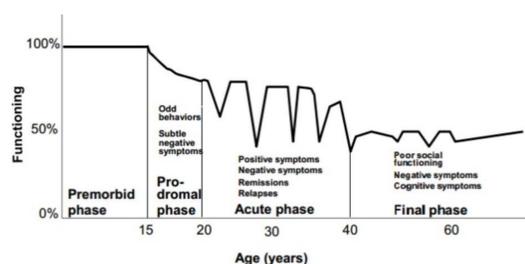
They must also displayed a second of these, or one of the following:

- **Grossly disorganised or catatonic behaviour**
 - Unpredictable, possibly agitated behaviour, difficulty in focusing on and competing tasks, catatonia.
- **Negative symptoms**
 - Less dramatic than the **postive symptoms** described so far, but are experience more often, not just in accute episodes.



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In total they must have been continuously affected for at least 6 months, of which at least one month showed severe symptoms (**acute episodes**), while the remainder showed reduced symptoms.



3.2 Affective disorders

Characterised by experiencing episodes of mania and depression. Can be just once, multiple episodes or chronic.

Manic episodes include effects that happen most days for at least a week. Three or more of the following happen, strongly enough that it can be seen not to be the patient's usual behavior and severe enough to affect functioning in social or work situations:

- Increased self esteem
- Lack of need for sleep
- Unusually talkative
- Flights of ideas
- Easily distracted
- Increased goal-directed activity
- Excessive involvement in risky activities



Major depressive episodes is diagnosed if for most of a two week period, experiencing at least five symptoms which have a significant effect on functioning of which at least one is:

- Near-continuous depressed mood (sadness, empyness, hopelessness)
 - Lack of interest ot pleasure in activities
- Other symptoms can include:
- Sleep disorder (insomnia or hypersomnia)
 - Psychomotor aggitation
 - Loss of energy (fatigue)
 - Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
 - Loss of concentration, indecisiveness
 - Recurring thoughts about death, potentially including suicidal thoughts



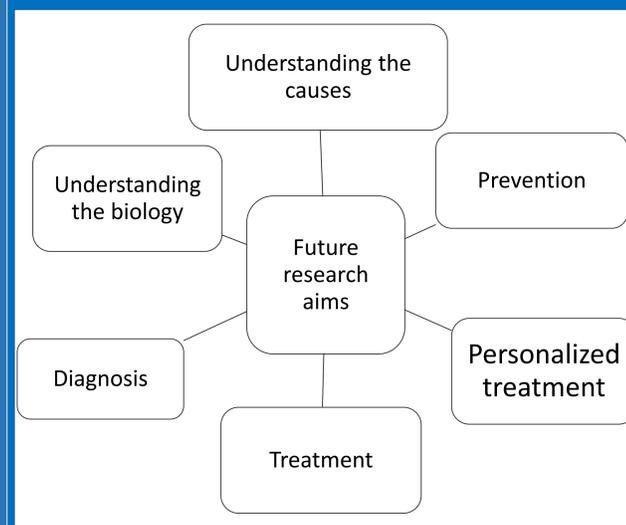
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4. Conclusions

"At least 60% of individuals who have had one depressive episode will have another, 70%% of individuals who have had two depressive episodes will have a third, and 90% of individuals with three episodes will have a fourth episode."

- Richards & Perry 2010

Because more and more people are affected with one or more mental health issues the need to understand the causes and to find better ways of diagnostics grow rapidly.



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