

Schizophrenia: what we know now

September 13 2010

(PhysOrg.com) -- Emory psychologist Elaine Walker, who has studied the origins and precursors of psychosis for 30 years, edited a special issue of 'Current Directions in Psychological Science,' summarizing the recent research on every facet of schizophrenia.

“Many people lament the slow pace of research progress on the causes of schizophrenia, and it is certainly true that far too many individuals continue to suffer from this debilitating disorder. But it’s also true that there have been significant scientific advances in recent years,” says Emory psychologist Elaine Walker.

Walker, who has studied the origins and precursors of [psychosis](#) for 30 years, edited a special issue of “Current Directions in [Psychological Science](#),” summarizing the recent research on every facet of schizophrenia.

During the late 1800s, the syndrome was referred to as early-onset dementia, since the symptoms begin during the late teens or early adulthood. In the 1920s, schizophrenia was associated with a frail body type, another theory that soon bit the dust. By the 1950s and 1960s, psychosocial theories were popular, and schizophrenia was linked to mothers who were unduly cold and critical to their children.

“These ideas not only proved to be incorrect, but they also caused great distress for the parents who were being blamed,” Walker says.

“Scientists gradually gave up the search for the silver bullet,” she adds.

"They now have come believe that schizophrenia is not a single disorder, but rather a syndrome with multiple causes."

The special journal issue, aimed at both scientists and the general public, gives overviews of prenatal factors, genetics, [neurological development](#), [brain abnormalities](#), [social cognition](#) and functioning and promising new avenues for treatment on these various fronts. "We hope that this special issue will inspire young investigators, who, in the future, will move us closer to solving the complex puzzle of schizophrenia," Walker says.

More information: cdp.sagepub.com/content/current

Provided by Emory University

Citation: Schizophrenia: what we know now (2010, September 13) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-09-schizophrenia.html>

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