

Review finds that childhood trauma can lead to psychosis

February 3 2014



The review urges mental health staff to “take more of an interest in the lives of the people they are trying to help”

(Medical Xpress)—Research, led by a University of Liverpool psychologist, has found strong support for the theory that early childhood trauma, such as abuse and neglect, could lead to the development of psychosis in later life.

An international team of researchers reviewed more than 120 reports on the biological mechanisms underlying the relationship between

[childhood trauma](#) and [psychosis](#).

Social causes

They concluded that people experiencing psychosis should be offered evidence-based psychological therapies that address the social causes of their difficulties.

Anomalies in the brains of people diagnosed with [mental health problems](#) such as 'schizophrenia' have traditionally been used to support the notion that such problems are biologically based brain disorders that have little to do with [life events](#).

Recent research, however, shows support for the 'traumagenic neurodevelopmental' model of psychosis, which suggests that those differences can be caused by adverse life events, especially those occurring in early childhood.

Professor John Read, from the University of Liverpool's Institute of Psychology, Health and Society, said:

"Trauma based brain changes should not be thought of as being indicative of having a brain disorder or disease. The changes are reversible. Recent studies have found, for example, that the brain's oversensitivity to stressors can be reduced by properly designed psychotherapy.

Interest in lives

"The primary prevention implications are profound. Protection and nurturance of the developing brain in young children would seem to be of paramount importance.

"We hope that this vast body of literature will encourage more [mental health](#) staff to take more of an interest in the lives of the people they are trying to help, rather than viewing hearing voices and having unusual beliefs as mere symptoms of an 'illness' that need to be suppressed with medication."

More information: The review was published in *Neuropsychiatry*.
Read the full paper here: [www.futuremedicine.com/doi/pdf ...
us/10.2217/npv.13.89](http://www.futuremedicine.com/doi/pdf/us/10.2217/npv.13.89)

Provided by University of Liverpool

Citation: Review finds that childhood trauma can lead to psychosis (2014, February 3) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-childhood-trauma-psychosis.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--