

A Study on Sociopaths

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Abstract

Our universe is diverse in nature with lot's of beautiful minds. But sometimes due to various circumstances this mind could be affected with some sort of mental disorders. Likewise a famous disorder known as antisocial personality disorder was observed which includes two broad terms sociopath and psychopath. This article describes on the lives of sociopath and behavior, aetiology of such disorder, treatment procedures and at last conclusion which elicits a positive attitude towards this disorder.

Keywords: Antisocial personality disorder; Sociopath; Psychopath.

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Introduction

The term Sociopath is made up of two words, i.e. Socio and Path. Socio means social in simple terms but path is derived from Greek word pathos which means 'sick and suffering'. In general terms sociopaths are group of people who are suffering from psychiatric disorders where they manifest themselves with antisocial personality. Basically sociopaths are described as someone who have antisocial personality disorder (ASPD). According to Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM), antisocial personality disorder is a personality disorder characterized by long term pattern of disregard for or violation of rights of others.¹

Those with antisocial personality disorder shows symptoms at early age but this is such a worse type

of condition which could be only diagnosed at adolescence stage. Their behaviour is often shaped by environmental factors mostly exposure to abuse or expedient behaviour.

Discussion

The simplest way to conceptualize any psychiatric disorder is disturbance of Cognition, Conation and Affects or any disequilibrium between three.² Similarly Sociopathy is a broad term which refers to a pattern of antisocial behaviour and attitude including manipulative behaviour which often arises from environmental factors. The general epidemiology of anti social personality disorder is seen in 3% to 30% of psychiatric disorder.³ Sociopathy is often conceptualized as diagnosis but it is not a formal diagnosis. It is invoked

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indiscussing people on anti social spectrum who generally display callous behaviour with little regard for others.

There are behaviour which are very significant in the lives of sociopath which includes under followings.⁴

They always have high manipulative skills and they often appear to be charming. They are often to see dominant and humiliate their victims.

- There is always a significant pathological lying which is seen in sociopathic behaviour. They are extremely convincing and they could even pass the lie detector test.
- They have lack of remorse, shame or guilt.
- They have lack of empathy and they often show callous behaviour.
- They have criminal versatility. They change their image as needed to avoid prosecution. They can even change their life story readily.
- They never blame themselves but blame others even for acts that they had obviously committed.
- They usually has a history of behavioural and academic difficulties.
- Verbal outburst and physical punishments are normal in sociopathic patients.
- They behave they are all powerful they know everything, there is no sense of personal boundaries, no concern for their impact on others.

There is always a misconception regarding differences between psychopath and sociopath.

Both have the common traits of antisocial personality disorder, but they differ in in the traits of behavioural characteristics.

Psychopaths are very calculative in nature. They always plot their moves. They might use aggression but in a laid plan way to get what they want. So they are often termed as 'cold hearted'. Their soul mission is to manipulate others for personal gain, they are also known as skilled actors. On the contrary sociopaths are often term as 'hot headed'. They just express themselves without thinking how others would be affected.⁵

According to Web MD, a key difference between a psychopath and sociopath is whether he has a conscience. Psychopath doesn't have conscience. Whereas sociopath has conscience, but it's weak. They might feel some guilt or remorse, but that doesn't affect their behaviour.

Another misconception regarding antisocial personality disorder is based on their violent instinct. Some people with antisocial personality disorder could be violent but on a general as most of them are found to be not.

They are seen to be use their manipulative behaviour to get what they want. They have no empathy they can hurt anyone to achieve their needs. But if one follows on history of sociopathy violence record, John Gacy name would be highlighted. He used to entertain kids as a clown at birthday parties. People adored him. He was one of the most famous sociopath to ever walk on earth. In 1970 he murdered 32 young men and buried most of them in crawl space under his house. History also had shown authors like Jack Henry Abott who wasn't a serial killer but crime of forgery sent him to the prison. Where he stabbed someone upon escaping from prison. He died by suicide in prison in 2002, but his sociopath charm lives on. His famous quote on section of brainy quotes was quoted as 'One morning I woke up and plunged into psychological shock. I had forgotten I was free'.⁶

Treatments

The treatment for sociopathy is very challenging because it is mostly diagnosed at very last stage of life that is for 40s and beyond.

Psychotherapy is the only therapy which is highly recommended for antisocial personality disorder. Psychotherapy always help the patient with proper management to resist negative behaviour and thoughts. They also improve the patient to develop interpersonal skills, the area where they might lack. Supreme goal should be to reduce the impulsive behaviour which makes sociopath often hostile and versatile. There are no medication which have been approved by FDA to treat antisocial personality disorder. There are medication which might help reduce aggressive and impulsive behaviour. This includes mood stabilizers and antidepressants. The only treatment with very high success rate would be proper support from family and friends. Family members should also be counselled to improve communication with the patient. Love and faith of the family members and friends can cure this condition to some extent.⁷

Conclusion

There is no way to prevent this antisocial personality disorder. There are even no exact cause known for

this disorder. But antisocial behaviour is thought to have its root in childhood so it becomes necessary for parents, teachers and paediatricians who should be able to spot the early warning signs so that it might help to identify those at risk. It often discourages if one had loved ones with antisocial personality disorder. With proper psychotherapy, patient with antisocial personality disorder do learn to form strong bonds and positive relationships, be more responsible and respect the boundaries of others. So if your loved ones are suffering from this condition one must consult with mental health professionals who would cure your loved ones so that they lead a prosperous life and stay physically and mentally healthy ahead.

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