

Mental Illness and the Brain

Biological Approaches

Treponema pallidum

cause of syphilis

infected 10-15% of institutionalized patients at the turn of the century

eradicated by arsphenamine

completely prevented by penicillin

effectively gone from the US population at the end of WWII

the virus that causes strep throat in children has been linked with OCD-like behavior

Anxiety disorders

panic disorder

panic attacks - feeling of dying, heart palpitations, nausea, chills, tremors

attacks last for up to 30 minutes

about 2% of population affected, twice as common in women than men

Agoraphobia

fear of situations not easily escaped

fear of leaving the house

about 5% of pop. affected, women twice as much as men

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

people have recurrent obsessions

typically germ-based or something unseen

compulsions are actions brought on by obsessions

affects about 5% of pop, men as much as women

Psychosocial Approaches

Freud

1. the majority of the mental life is unconscious

2. past experiences, particularly childhood, influence how a person feels and reacts

Behaviorism

B.F. Skinner

rejects the notion of underlying processes and focuses on observable behavior and the environment.

psychotherapy - talk therapy