

Psychology: Abnormality - Notes for 07/11/03

Four Characteristics of Anorexia

- Refusal to maintain normal body weight
- Fear or anxiety of putting on weight
- Amenorrhea – ceasing periods
- Distorted body image

Four Characteristics of Bulimia

- Determined not to lose weight but to maintain it
- Binges, leading onto:
- Self hatred, disgust, guilt
- Purging, vomiting.

Anorexia and Bulimia – relevant points

- Low levels of noradrenaline
- Runs in families
- Those with female relatives with an eating disorder are 5 times more likely to develop it themselves
- 47% MZ, 10% DZ concordance rate
- Biology – the hypothalamus regulates hunger
- Research into the above on animals
- Anorexics can be hungry
- Low serotonin – carbohydrate craving
- Cortisol – stress – anorexia
- Low level of one endogenous opioid that induces cravings in bulimics
- High serotonin levels promote less hunger
- Families of anorexics:
 - Extreme intimacy, overinvolvement
 - Extreme concern for welfare
 - Set in their ways

The Diathesis – Stress Model

Diathesis
(*biological predisposition*) + Stress
(*life experiences*) = Disorder

Causes of Eating Disorders

Models of abnormality applied to eating disorders:

Biological Abnormality in hypothalamus resulting in lack of hunger
PsychoD Society's and past family's attitudes to food
Cognitive Looking fat in their eyes
Behavioural Acquaintance with eating disorder, seeing attention, copying