

Goal: To learn about and evaluate the contributions that
biology can make to our attempts to explain and treat
abnormal behavior

PART IIIA: BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Biological Perspectives

- ⦿ Behavior is not possible without biology
- ⦿ The medical model and psychiatry began the search for natural causes of mental disorder in late 18th century
- ⦿ Discovering the link between syphilis and general paresis was a major step forward
- ⦿ Many forms of dementia and intellectual disability have been shown to have an identifiable organic basis
- ⦿ But not yet many other forms of psychopathology

Biological Perspectives

- ◎ The biological perspective includes:
 - Genetics and heredity
 - The brain and nervous system: neuroanatomy and neurochemistry
 - Environmental factors, both pre- and post-natal, such as toxins in air, water, or food; infections; and diet

Biological Perspectives

- ⦿ Words of caution:
 - Biology is just one part of a biopsychosocial view of psychopathology
 - The diathesis-stress concept
 - Even if biological factor X occurs together with mental disorder Y, correlation does not mean causation
 - Too much focus on biology alone is reductionist
 - The treatment-etiology fallacy
 - Biological “disasters”