Patients taking Lithium, an antimanic medication, must carefully monitor their salt intake. Diarrhea, sweating, fever, change in diet, or anything else that lowers the level of sodium in their system can result in a toxic build up of Lithium, which can result in slurred speech, confusion, irregular heart beat, vomiting, blurred vision, and possibly death.

Certain psychoactive drugs are lethal in excessive doses, and therefore may not be a viable treatment option for patients at risk for suicide unless they can be dispensed in a controlled manner.

Many psychoactive drugs are contraindicated in pregnancy, particularly in the first trimester. Patients should check with their doctor about the risks associated with psychotherapeutic medications and possible treatment options when planning a pregnancy.

Paula Ford-Martin

Further Reading

Further Information
National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). 6001 Executive Boulevard, Rm. 8184, MSC 9663, Bethesda, MD, USA. 20892-9663, fax: (301)443-4279, (301)443-4513. Email: nimhinfo@nih.gov. http://www.nimh.nih.gov.

Psychoanalysis
A method of treatment for mental, emotional, and behavioral dysfunctions as developed by Sigmund Freud.

Developed in Vienna, Austria, by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), psychoanalysis is based on an approach in which the therapist helps the patient better understand him- or herself through examination of the deep personal feelings, relationships, and events that have shaped motivations and behavior. Freud developed his theories during the end of the 19th and the early part of the 20th centuries in Vienna, Austria, where he was a practicing physician specializing in neurological disorders. Freud’s interest originated in his medical practice when he encountered patients who were clearly suffering physical symptoms for which he could find no organic, or biological, cause. Freud’s first attempt to get at the psychological cause of these patients’ pain was through hypnosis, which he studied in Paris in 1885. He found the results to be less than he’d hoped, however, and soon borrowed from a Viennese contemporary the idea of getting a patient to simply talk about his or her problems. Freud expanded upon this practice, however, by creating the idea of “free association,” in which a patient is encouraged to speak in a non-narrative, non-directed manner, with the hope that he or she will eventually reveal/uncover the unconscious heart of the problem. This sort of unbridled, undirected self-exploration became one of the signature tenets of psychoanalysis.

Continuing his research of the mind and the unconscious, Freud published The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900. In this work he outlined his ideas about the construction of the mind and human personality. This book was followed by the now basics of the Freudian canon: The Psychopathology of Everyday Life in 1904 and A Case of Hysteria and Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, both in 1905. By the second decade of the 20th century, Freud had become an internationally renowned thinker, and psychoanalysis had emerged as a significant intellectual achievement on par with the work of Albert Einstein in physics and in many ways comparable to the modernist movement in the visual arts. Psychoanalysis was in its prime and it became something of a fad to undergo psychoanalytic treatment among the Western world’s elite.

Psychoanalysis and the development of personality
Freud believed that human personality was constructed of three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id, according to this schema, is comprised largely of instinctual drives—for food and sex, for instance. These drives are essentially unconscious and result in satisfaction when they are fulfilled and frustration and anxiety when they are thwarted. The ego is linked to the id, but is the component that has undergone socialization and which recognizes that instant gratification of the id urges is not always possible. The superego acts in many ways like the ego, as a moderator of behavior; but whereas the ego moderates urges based on social constraints, the superego operates as an arbiter of right and wrong. It moderates the id’s urges based on a moral code. Having theorized this framework of human personality, Freud used it to demonstrate how instinctual drives are inevitably confounded with strictly social codes (by the ego) and by notions of morality (by the superego). This conflict, psychoanalytic theory supposes, is at the heart of anxiety and neuroses.

In dealing with these conflicts, Freud’s psychoanalytic theory suggests that the human mind constructs three forms of adaptive mechanisms: namely, defense mechanisms, neurotic symptoms, and dreams. Freud believed dreams were vivid representations of repressed
urges: the id speaking out in wildly incongruous nighttime parables. He considered dreams to have two parts, the manifest content, the narrative that one is able to remember upon waking, and the latent content, the underlying, largely symbolic message. Because Freud believed dreams to represent unfulfilled longings of the id, psychoanalysis deals heavily with dream interpretation.

Psychoanalytic theory also sees various neurotic symptoms as symbolic acts representing the repressed longings of the id. For Freud, a neurotic symptom was what we now consider a psychosomatic disorder, some physical symptom that has a psychological, or in Freud’s terms, neurological, origin. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that conditions like blindness, paralysis, and severe headaches can result from unfulfilled longings that the patient is unable to confront on a conscious level. Because of this inability, the patient develops some acceptable symptom, such as headaches, for which he or she can then seek medical attention.

The final adaptive mechanism Freud suggested are defense mechanisms. Freud identified several defense mechanisms, such as repression, displacement, denial, rationalization, projection, and identification. Each has its own peculiar dynamic but all work to distance a person from a conflict that is too difficult to confront realistically. These conflicts, according to psychoanalytic theory, originate during one of the four developmental stages Freud identified. These stages, and the infantile sexuality he identified as occurring within them, are some of the most controversial aspects of psychoanalytic theory. Freud suggested that adult neuroses was a result of and could be traced back to frustrated sexual gratification during these stages, which are: the oral stage, birth to one year; the anal stage, 1-3 years; the phallic stage, 3-5 years; and latency, five years to puberty. Each of these stages is in turn divided into sub-stages. In each of the major stages, the infant has sexual needs which, because of social mores, are left largely unfulfilled, causing neuroses to originate.

It is during the phallic stage that Freud hypothesized the development of the Oedipus complex, easily the most renowned and controversial theoretical construction of the Freudian canon. The Oedipus complex suggests that during the phallic stage, a child begins associating his genitals with sexual pleasure and becomes erotically attracted to the parent of the opposite sex while at the same time developing an intense jealousy of the same-sex parent. While Freud’s original theory excludes consideration of females, his contemporary, Carl Jung (1875-1961), expanded this particular dynamic and theorized an Electra complex for women in which the same psychodrama of erotic attraction and jealousy is played out from the young girl’s point of view.

**Freud’s critics**

From nearly the beginning, Freud and his construction of psychoanalytic theory have faced intense criticism. His most famous dissenter is Jung, his former disciple. Jung split with Freud in 1913 over a variety of issues, including, but certainly not limited to, Freud’s emphasis on infantile sexuality. Jung had a different view of the construction of human personality, for instance, and had different ideas about how dreams should be interpreted and viewed as part of psychoanalysis. Alfred Adler, another disciple of Freud, broke with the master over infantile sexuality, positing a view that infants and children are driven primarily by a need for self-affirmation rather than sexual gratification. In modern times, Freud has been the target of criticism from many corners. Feminists especially criticize his understanding of “hysteria” and his theory of Oedipal conflict.

Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on uncovering unconscious motivations and breaking down defenses. Many therapists feel that psychoanalysis is the most effective technique to identify and deal with internal conflicts and feelings that contribute to dysfunctional behavior. Through psychoanalysis, the patient increases his understanding of himself and his internal conflicts so that they will no longer exert as much influence on mental and emotional health.

**Further Reading**


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**Psychodrama**

See Role playing/psychodrama

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**Psychological Abstracts**

Monthly journal published by the American Psychological Association.

Founded in 1927, *Psychological Abstracts* contains nonevaluative summary abstracts of literature in the field of psychology and related disciplines, which are grouped into 22 major classification categories. It includes summaries of technical reports as well as journal.