

History of Psychiatry

History of Psychiatry – Concise Study Notes

1. Foundations (Ancient to Medieval Period)

Era	Key Figures / Texts	Main Ideas & Practices
Ancient Egypt (c. 3000 BCE)	Ebers Papyrus	Mental disturbances linked to supernatural forces; treatments included prayers, amulets, and herbal remedies.
Ancient Greece (5th–4th c. BCE)	Hippocrates, <i>The Sacred Disease</i> (by Hippocrates)	First biological model: “brain disease” rather than demonic possession. Recommended diet, exercise, music, and “humoral” balance.
Roman Medicine (1st c. CE)	Galen	Expanded humoral theory; emphasized the brain as seat of reason; introduced “melancholia” for depression-like states.
Islamic Golden Age (8th–13th c.)	Al-Razi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina)	Integrated Greek ideas; described “psychic disorders” and advocated humane care, early psychiatric wards in hospitals (bimaristans).
Medieval Europe (5th–15th c.)	Religious authorities	Mental illness often interpreted as demonic possession; treatments: exorcism, prayer, confinement in monasteries or “mad houses.”

2. Early Modern Era (16th–18th c.)

Development	Contributors	Significance
Moral Treatment	Philippe Pinel (France, 1793) – “Unshackling the insane”; William Tuke (York Retreat, England, 1796)	Shift from chains to humane, structured environments; emphasis on kindness, work, and social interaction.
Asylums & Institutionalization	Growth of large public asylums (e.g., Bethlem Royal Hospital, London)	Provided dedicated spaces for care but often became overcrowded; set stage for later reforms.

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Early Classification	<i>John Haslam</i> (1809) – “The Insane”; <i>James Cowles Prichard</i> (1835) – “Manic?depressive insanity”	Began systematic description of mental disorders.

3. 19th?Century Scientific Expansion

Theme	Highlights
Biological Theories	<i>Johann Christian Reil</i> coined “psychiatria” (1808); <i>Emil Kraepelin</i> (1856?1926) introduced disease?oriented classification (dementia praecox vs. manic?depressive illness).
Psychological Approaches	<i>Jean?Étienne Dominique Esquirol</i> (1838) – “l’aliénation mentale”; <i>Julius Wagner?Jauregg</i> (1909) – malarial therapy for neurosyphilis (first biological cure).
Institutional Reform	Dorothea Dix (U.S.) advocated state hospitals; the “asylum movement” peaked with >30,000 beds by 1900.
First Psychopharmacology	19th?century use of bromides, chloral hydrate for agitation; laid groundwork for later drug therapy.

4. Early 20th Century – The “Psychiatric Revolutions”

Year	Event / Publication	Impact
1900	<i>Kraepelin’s “Psychiatrie”</i> (2	