Anti-Social Personality Disorder

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Abstract

This paper is based on the topic of anti-social personality disorder (ASPD). It is a disorder which makes the person show carefree behavior towards people and society. These are the people who quite often commit crimes and are not able to realize and admit that they have done anything wrong. The paper introduces the disorder which is followed by the identification of the disorder in patients. After that, there is a section of symptoms in which the signs of the disorder are discussed so that it becomes easy to identify a person with ASPD. Later on in the paper, the possible treatment techniques and approaches are given to help the readers understand how to threat-patients with anti-social personality disorder. Although ASPD has been proved and found to be a very difficult case to cure, it does not mean that nothing can be done in this regard. The role of family members, friends and psychologists can bring change provided the treatment is done and carried out for a long period of time.

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Introduction

Anti-social personality Disorder (ASPD) is a disorder in which a person does not show any respect and concern towards the rights and benefits of other people and pursues what interests and benefits them alone. The name of this disorder often gives a wrong perception that it is about a person who does not like to be social and likes loneliness. Well, this is not exactly true. Anti-social personality disorder makes the person rebel from societal rules and regulation, and they are often sidelined and boycotted by others due to their own unfriendly and may be possibly hostile behavior towards other people.

Identification of ASPD

The extreme cases of anti-social personality result in the person committing crimes by violating the rights of other people and benefiting themselves. A person with this disorder thinks and believes that they are different from everyone, and there is no way they can fit into society. The patients suffering from this disorder think that they are right and the rest of society is wrong. This is what drives these people away from people and norms and they start becoming isolated and ignored which give rise to other psychological problems as well (De Brito & Hodgins, 2009).

Symptoms

The main symptom of this disorder is that the patient does not pay any regard to the rights of the other people and acts in a manner which manipulates and violates their rights. They are prone to substance abuse and often become criminals because they have the ability to manipulate situations for their own benefit and interest. Under usual circumstances, the diagnosis of this disease is given when the patient is above 18 years of age, and there are very a few cases in which children under 15 years of age are diagnosed with ASPD where there has been a long pattern of some of the symptoms.

A person with this disorder shows the symptoms through their behavior and acts towards other people or societal institutions and therefore not very difficult to identify. One thing which must also be kept in mind it is not as simple to identify a patient of ASPD as there can be many other reasons why a specific person is not taking care or protecting the rights of others (Meloy & Yarkeley, 2011). Everybody on the road you see violating others’ rights cannot be categorized as a patient of anti-social personality disorder.

There has to be long-term repetitive instances of violation and manipulating of the rights due to a reason. It makes the case stronger and realistic because without any history there is no evidence of what made that person do this. So it is very important to know why the person is violating the rights of others and what is or what was the relationship and connection between the violator and the victim. This will help clarify the motive behind the violations and will enable the psychologist to propose treatment for the patient.

People with anti-social personality disorder tend to act over-smart and they are usually pretty good at flattering others so that they can play with the emotions of the other people, making it easier for them to violate the rights and jeopardize the security and safety of others. This shows that people with this disorder are not only in need of medical and psychological care but are also dangerous to society and the people living around that person. It is a very dangerous disorder in this regard, as the people suffering from this disorder are malicious as they tend to take the law into their own hands.

Treatment of Anti-Social Personality Disorder

As far as treating patients with ASPD is concerned, there is one kind of therapy called psychotherapy which is mostly used and is proved to be useful. It is also known as talk therapy. In this therapy, the patient is brought closer to the therapists and given the confidence that it is okay to at least discuss their feelings. As the patient is drawn in closer, they are diagnosed, analyzed and treated for ASPD after determining the reasons which drove them towards committing crimes or violating other peoples’ rights.

During the psychotherapeutic sessions, the patient is treated for several mental conditions which caused them behave the way they do. The treatments include anger management, violence management, and substance abuse management. These are the probable symptoms of a person suffering from ASPD, so it is a priority need to be coped up with. It is basically the anger and violent behavior which are deep rooted in such people that make them selfish and inconsiderate about the rights, safety, and lives of other people. It is the actions which make them solitary and isolated from the crowd which results in depression and probable substance abuse. So there is a chain of actions and crimes which can develop and become very difficult to diagnose and treat (Swanson, Bland & Newman, 1994).

The Psychotherapy makes patients think differently and become less violent and angry. The change in their behavior makes them less prone to violent and angry actions including crimes and violating of the rights of other people. However, talk-therapy is not always effective, especially in the cases where the patients are extreme and do not realize that they are contributing to the problems and from their actions. There are certain limitations of talk therapy and in the cases where this is not effective, other techniques are employed to treat the patients. What is most difficult in treating patients with anti-social personality disorder who do not realize they need help is that, the medication options are also ineffective. Medications are given to such patients of ASPD very thoughtfully and carefully because they are more prone to substance and drug abuse. Therefore care must be taken that the medications being used for such patients do not have side effects that may result in the patient becoming addicted to it.

The mental conditions which a patient with ASPD faces are mostly depression and anxiety, and the medicines for these conditions do have an addictive nature. Hence, it is not wise to put an anti-social personality disorder patient on such medicines unless there is no other option. If medication and talk therapy are ineffective for a patient of ASPD then there are other things which can be done to treat patients with serious cases.

The family members and other people close to the patient play an important role in helping the patient establish a normal life and start taking care of not only themselves but the people around them. Family members are involved in the treatment of such patients by psychologists. Family members are first made to understand the reasons why the patient is doing such things, and then they are given the roles of facilitators, assisting the medical professionals in curing individual (Sutker & King, 1985).

In the field of abnormal psychology, this disorder is one of the most challenging disorders as patients of the extreme kind are not only a threat to themselves but also to the outside world. Therefore treating these patients is very important for the patients as well as for their families and society as well. Psychologists also help family members of the ASPD to avoid being harmed by the person. Family members are given tips and techniques on how to deal with their loved one who is suffering from ASPD in order to keep a safe distance from them and avoid harm, and at the same time are able to help them stay out of trouble.

The role of family members is more proactive and useful in mild cases of ASPD where the patients have not yet reached the extreme and intense stage and are somewhat ready to listen to other people and also may admit their role in creating problems to those around them. It is the patients in extreme stage which are a challenge for society, as to some extent, society is also responsible for making a person turn completely against others in society.

Conclusion

There is a reason behind the actions taken by a patient and there must be a history which needs to be explored. Any unjust incident at a young age or things like bullying, etc., may cause the person to be rebellious and seek revenge on each and every member of society. Another reason for deviant behavior can be ignorance or loneliness experienced in childhood. This can make a person careless and unconcerned about what others say, think and do. In order to better understand the patients with ASPD, there is a need to look deeply into the life of the person and meet the people who have known them since they were very young (National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health UK, 2010). Quite often a past incident proves to be the source of the need to exhibit such reckless behavior.

References

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