

Pervasive developmental disorders, also known as *autistic spectrum disorders*, are not categorized as externalizing or internalizing; they are characterized by children who are impaired socially and who show problems communicating. A prevalent example of pervasive developmental disorder is autism. **Autistic children** tend to show symptoms a few months after birth, have problems forming attachments and communicating, and suffer severe cognitive impairments that affect concentration, learning, and social interactions with others.

Asperger's disorder, a less severe form of autism, causes children to experience problems in social relationships; they also engage in repetitive behaviors. These repetitive behaviors may include memorizing obscure facts such as numbers in a phone book. Overall, however, Asperger children do not show severe cognitive impairments and often are able to function independently as adults.

Research with autistic children has led to the study of mirror neurons, which are linked to the observation and perception of other people's thoughts and behaviors. Autistic children tend to show a deficit in the functioning of their mirror neurons, which may explain why they seem less interested in what others are thinking or doing.

AP Tip

A multiple-choice or free-response question might ask you to identify and explain different types of childhood disorders. Be prepared to identify the causes of each disorder.

Multiple-Choice Questions

- Jimmy and Rich are identical twins who share a genetic predisposition for major depression. Jimmy lives a fast-paced lifestyle that involves a challenging career, travel, and not much time for rest and relaxation. Rich, on the other hand, lives a more relaxed life and enjoys a simpler lifestyle. When they turned 35, Jimmy alone showed symptoms of major depression. Which approach may explain why Jimmy, but not Rich, became depressed?
 - Medical model
 - Diathesis-stress model
 - Biological model
 - Humanistic model
 - Psychodynamic model

2. According to the biopsychosocial model, genetic predispositions would be an example of which factor(s)?
 - (A) Biological and social
 - (B) Psychological and social
 - (C) Biological
 - (D) Psychological
 - (E) Social
3. What refers to the process of investigating possible causes and developmental factors that may contribute to the onset of psychological disorders?
 - (A) Etiology
 - (B) Prevalence
 - (C) Epidemiology
 - (D) Speculation
 - (E) Criteria spectrum
4. Mental retardation and personality disorders would be listed on which axis in the DSM-IV-TR?
 - (A) Axis I
 - (B) Axis II
 - (C) Axis III
 - (D) Axis IV
 - (E) Axis V
5. A phobia is defined as
 - (A) a repetitive thought followed by a compulsive act
 - (B) free-floating anxiety that is displayed in many situations
 - (C) a delusional belief that impairs reality
 - (D) an inaccurate perception
 - (E) an unjustified, irrational fear
6. Sally has reported that she experiences anxiety throughout much of her day. She has no idea why she is experiencing this anxiety, and lately it has become more persistent, making it harder for her to fulfill her daily activities and routines. Sally most likely would be diagnosed with
 - (A) a phobia
 - (B) obsessive-compulsive disorder
 - (C) post-traumatic stress disorder
 - (D) generalized anxiety disorder
 - (E) schizophrenia
7. Luke recently experienced a sudden loss of memory that resulted in his forming a new identity, traveling to a new location and beginning a new life with no memory of his previous life. Luke would most likely be diagnosed with
 - (A) dissociative identity disorder
 - (B) dissociative amnesia
 - (C) dissociative fugue
 - (D) schizophrenia
 - (E) generalized anxiety disorder

8. Dysthymic disorder is characterized by
- (A) major depression, including loss of appetite, feelings of worthlessness, and difficulty functioning at home and at work
 - (B) fluctuations between periods of major depression and extreme feelings of euphoria
 - (C) delusions and hallucinations
 - (D) mild depression that persists for more than two years
 - (E) irrational fears with no justifiable cause
9. A difference between bipolar I and bipolar II disorders is that bipolar II disorder includes
- (A) a longer period of mania
 - (B) more severe periods of mania
 - (C) less severe periods of mania
 - (D) shorter periods of mania
 - (E) no periods of mania
10. A problem on chromosome _____ seems to be connected with the production of serotonin, which may be linked to the development of mood disorders.
- (A) 13
 - (B) 12
 - (C) 14
 - (D) 8
 - (E) 7
11. "Split mind," used to describe schizophrenia, refers to
- (A) anxiety-arousing thoughts
 - (B) multiple personalities
 - (C) disorganized thinking patterns
 - (D) an inability to function properly
 - (E) catatonic behavior
12. James believes that he is God and that he therefore has tremendous powers. This would be an example of which characteristic of schizophrenia?
- (A) Delusions of grandeur
 - (B) Delusions of persecution
 - (C) Clang associations
 - (D) Hallucinations
 - (E) Flat affect
13. A type of schizophrenia that is characterized by total immobility and the holding of the body in a fixed position for a long period of time, referred to as waxy flexibility, is _____ schizophrenia.
- (A) paranoid
 - (B) disorganized
 - (C) undifferentiated
 - (D) residual
 - (E) catatonic

14. Excessive receptors of the neurotransmitter _____ have been linked to the development of schizophrenia.
- (A) serotonin
 - (B) GABA
 - (C) dopamine
 - (D) glutamate
 - (E) norepinephrine
15. _____ personality disorder is characterized by an excessive need to be taken care of, difficulty making decisions, and clinging behavior.
- (A) Histrionic
 - (B) Antisocial
 - (C) Narcissistic
 - (D) Dependent
 - (E) Obsessive-compulsive

Free-Response Questions

1. Dr. Daniels has seen a number of patients today who have sought psychological help. Read through each case and then indicate and explain what disorder each person is experiencing.
- (a) Shelly has reported that she is constantly experiencing periods of apprehension, fatigue, and irritability in most situations. It does not matter what she is doing or where she is going—she just seems to be worried and nervous.
 - (b) David has experienced a number of days where he feels extremely depressed, but is still able to go to work and go out with friends. Even though he states he is depressed, he is still able to maintain his job and family life.
 - (c) Mary has seen a number of doctors. In fact, she has driven miles out of her way to seek support for an apparent stomach ulcer that no doctor has been able to find. Mary insists that she is sick and will become even sicker if she does not get help.
 - (d) Rich believes that he is the best employee at work. He refuses to take advice from other co-workers and believes that he should be in charge. He is constantly telling others how good he is and how bad they are.
2. Explain how the following factors could play a part in the development of schizophrenia.
- (a) Neurotransmission
 - (b) Brain structure
 - (c) Pregnancy
 - (d) The environment