Schizophrenias in the Wernicke-Kleist-Leonhard School

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Published online: June 01, 2000

The Journal regularly highlights the nosology of the schizophrenias from various perspectives (1, 2). Notably, the extension of the schizophrenic spectrum depends on classification (1). We wish to elaborate on the Wernicke-Kleist-Leonhard school within the traditional and current context.

Originally, Kraepelin’s dementia praecox and Bleuler’s schizophrenias described heterogeneous psychoses with no restituto in integrum. They were unbiased against deficit symptoms. The Wernicke-Kleist-Leonhard school sustained this heuristic notion of the schizophrenias. It rejected nosological hybridism, empirically separating developmentally more conspicuous systematic schizophrenias of insidious onset or course from genetically higher loaded unsystematic schizophrenias inclined to some bipolarity (i.e., periodic catatonia, affective paraphrenia, and cataplasia). Thus, periodic catatonia is but one of three unsystematic schizophrenias that were previously omitted from mention (2). Some well-described conditions dominated by specific deficits were grouped into hebephrenias, which exist only in systematic forms. In fact, various cases of hebopidophobia (Kahlbaum), dementia simplex (Weygandt and Diem), schizophrenia (Bleuler and Kretschmer), schizotypes (Rado), latent schizophrenia (Bleuler), and pseudoneurotic schizophrenia (Hoch and Polatin) corresponded clinically to Kleist and Leonhard’s hebephrenias. Moreover, Leonhard passionately differentiated early childhood catatonias from mental retardation. Dementia infantilis (Heller) and early infantile autism (Kanner) overlapped to some extent with Leonhard’s systematic childhood catatonias, whereas autistic psychopathy of childhood (Asperger) denoted a nonschizophrenic condition.

Currently, DSM and ICD criteria strive for atheoretical consentaneity but impose several inconsistencies. Productive manifestations are appointed as primary gatekeepers for psychoses and schizophrenias that are subtyped but essentially treated as a single entity. Positive symptoms dominate the “A” criteria for DSM-IV schizophrenia. In anamnestic pervasive developmental disorders, DSM-IV defines comorbid schizophrenia as contingent on delusions or hallucinations. Similarly, the inclusion criteria for ICD-10 schizophrenia are largely neo-Schneiderian. Mere duration segregates schizophrenia from schizophreniform disorder. For both, ICD-10 refers to active duration but DSM-IV to total duration as well. Schizotypes are conceptualized either as personality disorders (DSM-IV) or as tightly related to schizophrenia (ICD-10). However, ICD-10 disfavors schizotypes as but DSM-IV to total duration as well. Schizotypes are conceptualized either as personality disorders (DSM-IV) or as tightly related to schizophrenia (ICD-10). However, ICD-10 disfavors schizotypes as...
disputes (e.g., of primary negative symptoms and alternative dimensional descriptors) must consider the history of the schizophrenias.

References