

IN SEARCH OF A TREATMENT

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Exorcisms, all kinds of drugs, asylums, shock therapy and lobotomy-this is just a brief list of horrifying procedures, done to cure people with mental illnesses throughout human history. People have always been trying to understand the nature of mental disorders in order to find a cure. The approach to treating mental disorders has changed drastically over time. These changes have given psychiatrists and scientists new ways to treat mental disorders.

During the Middle Ages, ideas about mental illnesses were often mixed with religious beliefs and superstitions. Societies of that time were highly religious, hence people were inclined to believe that mental disorders were caused by demonic possession. The two

demons, that, according to the article about Medieval Christian demonology, made people lose their mind were incubus-the male demon, and succubus-the female counterpart of the creature



Incubus-the male demon, who, according to Medieval folklore, was impregnating women with demonic seed.

(“Bouncing of The Baby Cambions”, 2013). Some sources say, that both incubus and succubus are the two parts of one creature. This mythical being is believed to make sexual contact with opposite sex people in order to impregnate either itself or the “victim” with a demonic seed (H. C. Maduabuchi, “Wisdom for Living”, 2015). An offspring of incubus

or succubus and human is called cambion. In religious societies of Medieval times, people, who claimed to be in a sexual contact with succubus or incubus were persecuted

“Other methods, used to “cure” patients were blistering, beating, isolation and bleeding.”

and burned, as they were considered to be witches. Sometimes, when people claimed to be possessed by the devil, in order to cure the “ill” person, the hole was made in a skull of the patient, which was meant to let the devil go out of the person’s head and eventually make the person feel relief (“The Curious Practice of Trepanning”, 2015).



The conditions patients were kept in at that time today would be considered absolutely cruel and inhumane.

As the time went by, perception of mental disorders kept changing, but strivings to find a cure for them stayed the same.

Around 1700’s the approach to mental diseases was hardly different from that of Medieval Times with only difference that patients with mental disorders were now being maintained in places called mental asylums.

People, admitted to these asylums usually had such mental disorders as depression, mania or melancholy. Being not regulated by any governmental or federal laws, mental asylums of 1700’s hardly resembled places, meant to help people in any way. The conditions patients were kept in at would be considered absolutely cruel and inhumane today. Due to the lack of personnel and



Philippe Pinel (1745-1826)

overflow of mentally diseased people, unruly patients were being managed by physical restraints. Other methods, used to “cure” patients were “blistering, beating, isolation and bleeding” (“A Beautiful Mind”, 2015). This continued up to 1797, until Philippe Pinel, a French physician, accomplished an act of humanity, which later became a historical moment. In 1797, after becoming a practitioner in Bicetre Hospital in Paris, Pinel got a permission from governor to liberate the insane from their chains. He allowed patients to walk freely around the hospital territory, replaced dark stuffy rooms with bright spacious rooms and ventilation system. Pinel has also put away all the torturing methods of curing and suggested a therapy, which implied close contact with patients and humane treatment in general. This was the turning point of

psychiatry, as it gained its place among other sciences ("Philippe Pinel", psychology.irank.org). Philippe Pinel has also best expressed the philosophy of being able to recognize if the treatment is right or not: "It is an art of no little importance to administer medicines properly," he said, "but it is an art of much greater and more difficult acquisition to know when to suspend or altogether to omit them" (Pinel,"A Quote by Philippe Pinel").

The beginning of 20th century brought up a new series of discoveries and innovations in the field of

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psychiatry, such as identification of the Alzheimer's disease, first publication of Conditional studies, done by Russian behaviorist Ivan Pavlov, creation of the term "Schizophrenia" by Swiss psychiatrist Paul Eugen Bleuler - the list of psychological discoveries made at that time continues. However, one of the most brutal and horror-striking inventions of the 20th century in psychiatry was the invention of lobotomy, which was invented to cure serious mental illnesses, such as

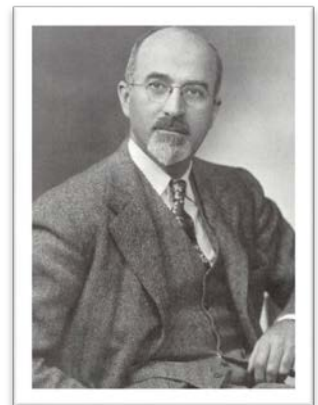
schizophrenia and severe depressions, but subsequently



Dr. Freeman performing a lobotomy (1949)

became an ultimate "cure" for all mental disorders, even though in some cases there was no need in surgical procedures at all. According to *the Wired*, lobotomies were used as a cure "well into the 1980's in the United States, Britain, Scandinavia and several Western European countries" (Long, 2010). The first lobotomy-like surgery was performed in 1935 by Portuguese neurologist Antonio Egas Moniz and was called "leucotomy". Leucotomy implied drilling holes in patient's skull in order to reach

certain parts of the brain and was first ever performed surgery to treat mental illness". ("The Surprising History of the



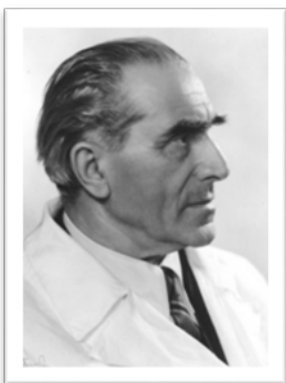
Walter Freeman (1895-1972)

Lobotomy.") The first American lobotomy was performed in 1936 by Walter Freeman (1895-1972). It was him, who came up with the term "lobotomy". He also expanded on ideas of Moniz by inventing 10-minute

trans orbital lobotomy, which allowed to make the procedure shorter in time and excluded the necessity to use drill in the surgery.

The popularity of lobotomy grew in an arithmetical progression. Despite the contradiction of psychoanalysts, people kept yielding themselves to the risk of becoming a “vegetable” and the reason for that was simple—the alternative to become one of the patients of overcrowded mental asylums was even worse. 1950’s brought lobotomy popularity down for the reason of it’s ineffectiveness and partly because of the creation of first psychiatric drugs.

In 1967, Walter Freeman performed the last lobotomy before it got banned due to the mortality levels resulting from this surgery ("The Surprising History of the Lobotomy").



Ugo Cerletti (1877-1963)

Henry Marsh, one of the most prosperous psychiatrists of Britain criticizes lobotomy, saying that it “reflected very bad medicine, bad science, because it was clear the patients who were subjected to this procedure were never followed up properly.” (Marsh, 2011). Nowadays lobotomy is hardly mentioned in any psychiatry institution, but there is probably no person who has not ever thought about brutality of this horrible surgery.

The beginning of 1937 brings to the existence another, entirely new

method of treating mental disorders – (“Shock Therapy”, Rollin, 2010). It was an Italian neurologist Ugo Cerletti (1877-1963), who first came up with an idea of practicing ECT instead of Metrazol-substance, injected intramuscularly to cause artificial



Electroconvulsive shock therapy (ECT)

epileptic convulsions, which was used in 1930’s as a treatment for mental disorders. (“The History of the Shock Therapy in Psychiatry”, Sabbatini). In comparison to Metrazol, ECT was rather harmless and more reliable. It was used for treating multiple psychiatric illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and especially severe depressions (University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry, 2016). Since that time and till today, Electroconvulsive Shock Therapy is considered to be the safest and effective treatment for severe mental illnesses.

Before the world became acquainted with modern methods of curing mental disorders, they have undergone drastic changes all the way through human history. Moreover, cure methods are still developing in a dynamic matter. Who knows, maybe there is even better and less harmful solution to mental disease treatment? Time will show...