

Linking mind and brain in the study of mental illnesses: a project for a scientific psychopathology.

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Linking Mind and Brain in the Study of Mental Illnesses: A Project for a Scientific Psychopathology

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Abstract

Brain research on mental illnesses has made substantial advances in recent years, supported by conceptual and technological developments in cognitive neuroscience. Brain-based cognitive models of illnesses such as schizophrenia and depression have been tested with a variety of techniques, including the lesion method, tract tracing, neuroimaging, animal modeling, single-cell recording, electrophysiology, neuropsychology, and experimental cognitive

psychology. A relatively sophisticated picture is emerging that conceptualizes mental illnesses as disorders of mind arising in the brain. Convergent data using multiple neuroscience techniques indicate that the neural mechanisms of mental illnesses can be understood as dysfunctions in specific neural circuits and that their functions and dysfunctions can be influenced or altered by a variety of cognitive and pharmacological factors.

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