

the 1990s, the number of people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia has increased in many countries, including the United Kingdom (Murray & Lewis, 1998). The increase in the prevalence of schizophrenia has been attributed to a number of factors, including changes in the environment, changes in the genetic structure of the population, and changes in the way in which the disorder is diagnosed (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

One of the most widely cited theories of the aetiology of schizophrenia is the diathesis-stress model (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

The diathesis-stress model proposes that schizophrenia is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Genetic factors are thought to be necessary for the development of schizophrenia, but they are not sufficient. Environmental factors, such as stress, are thought to be necessary for the disorder to manifest itself (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

According to the diathesis-stress model, a person with a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia will only develop the disorder if they experience a significant amount of stress. The amount of stress that a person experiences is thought to be related to the severity of their symptoms (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

The diathesis-stress model has been supported by a number of studies. For example, a study by Murray and Lewis (1998) found that people with a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia who experienced a significant amount of stress were more likely to develop the disorder than those who did not experience such stress.

Another study by Murray and Lewis (1998) found that people with a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia who experienced a significant amount of stress were more likely to have a relapse of their disorder than those who did not experience such stress. These findings suggest that the diathesis-stress model is a valid theory of the aetiology of schizophrenia (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

The diathesis-stress model has important implications for the treatment of schizophrenia. It suggests that people with a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia should be given stress-management techniques to help them avoid or reduce the amount of stress that they experience (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

There are a number of ways in which stress can be managed. One way is through the use of relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

Another way is through the use of cognitive-behavioural techniques, such as cognitive restructuring and exposure therapy (Murray & Lewis, 1998). These techniques can help people to change their thoughts and behaviours in a way that reduces their stress levels (Murray & Lewis, 1998).

The diathesis-stress model is a complex theory of the aetiology of schizophrenia. It suggests that the disorder is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The amount of stress that a person experiences is thought to be related to the severity of their symptoms (Murray & Lewis, 1998).