

Review of: "“Correlation does not Imply Causation”, while Psychotropic Drugs do cause Neurochemical Imbalances and Dysfunction of Neurotransmission"

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The paper by Preethi Morris provides a timely update and concise description of a very common misunderstanding prevailing in both communities of specialists, including medical doctors and pharmacologists, and informed laypeople, in particular journalists, which is that there is enough scientifically sound evidence proving that mental health problems and psychiatric diseases are caused by circumscribed neurochemical imbalances in the brain and should be treated accordingly with specific drugs (or other measures if available) to reinstate the proper balance.

Although repeatedly discussed in specialist literature to be incorrect, this already decades-old flawed notion continues to be very popular. This prompts the question of why this is/might be so. One possible reason is discussed in the paper: a mix-up of the meaning of the terms correlation and causation in light of the shaky experimental evidence. However, although undoubtedly important, I would like to add that the notion of molecular disturbances in the brain underlying mental problems is a relatively simple one for caregivers to understand and explain to others, takes away responsibility, and makes the disturbance easier to accept for the patient ("it is not me but my brain"), and is carried forward and maintained by the strong neuromolecular "gaze" prevailing in both the clinical and basic neurosciences, including pharmacotherapeutics, and the popular (scientific) biomedical press from the 1950s onwards. In such an atmosphere, stress and other experienced mental health issues easily become molecular brain diseases to be diagnosed (if possible), treated, and evaluated from a biological perspective, irrespective of the insufficient theoretical and experimental footing of the underlying theory and potential drawbacks and serious dangers involved in translating this understanding into action in the form of psychotropic drug prescription. I would suggest including a short discussion of these factors in the paper in support of the central claim. Moreover, I (and perhaps others as well) would be interested to read what the author would suggest to do in order to deal with this very real crisis.