16.2 Biological and Psychological Explanations of Offending Behaviour: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Outline one neural explanation of offending behaviour that focuses on the prefrontal cortex. Say what the prefrontal cortex does and give one type of supporting evidence.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Identify two ethical issues connected with using genetic or neural explanations of offending in criminal justice, and briefly explain one way each issue could be addressed.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Outline two cognitive explanations of offending behaviour from the specification: moral reasoning levels and cognitive distortions. Give one brief example for either explanation.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

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Mark scheme · 16.2 Biological and Psychological Explanations of Offending Behaviour: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

states that reduced functioning or damage to the prefrontal cortex is linked to poor impulse control and increased aggression or antisocial behaviour oe — **B1**

gives supporting evidence such as neuroimaging findings showing lower prefrontal activity in violent offenders, or case studies where frontal lobe damage led to disinhibited behaviour oe — **B1**

Answer: Reduced functioning or structural differences in the prefrontal cortex, which is involved in impulse control and decision making, are linked to greater impulsivity and aggressive or antisocial behaviour; this is supported by neuroimaging studies and case evidence where frontal lobe damage produced disinhibited behaviour.

Question 2

identifies an ethical issue, e.g. stigma or discrimination against individuals with a genetic risk for offending oe — **M1**

explains a mitigation, e.g. ensure genetic information is kept confidential and not used to deny rights, with clear legal safeguards oe — **A1**

identifies a second ethical issue, e.g. misuse of biological data in sentencing or deterministic attributions that reduce perceived responsibility oe — **M1**

explains a mitigation, e.g. guidelines and training for courts and practitioners emphasising probabilistic nature of findings and need to consider context oe — **A1**

Answer: Ethical issues include stigma or discrimination against those with genetic risk factors, which can be mitigated by confidentiality and legal safeguards, and misuse of biological data in sentencing or reducing perceived responsibility, which can be addressed by professional guidelines and training highlighting the probabilistic nature of genetic and neural findings.

Question 3

outlines moral reasoning explanation, e.g. offending linked to lower levels of moral reasoning where individuals judge actions in terms of consequences to the self rather than rules or social order oe — **M1**

outlines cognitive distortions, e.g. hostile attribution bias where offenders misinterpret others' actions as hostile, or minimalisation where offenders downplay the harm caused oe — **M1**

gives one brief example for either moral reasoning or a named cognitive distortion, e.g. minimalisation: a burglar saying the owner deserved it oe — **B1**

Answer: Lower levels of moral reasoning mean judging actions by personal gain rather than abstract rules, and cognitive distortions such as hostile attribution bias or minimalisation allow offenders to interpret others as threatening or to downplay harm, for example a thief claiming the victim deserved it.

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