16.2 Biological and Psychological Explanations of Offending Behaviour: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Outline Lombroso's atavistic form theory of offending, as an historical biological explanation for criminal behaviour. Mention the main claim and give one example of a physical feature Lombroso associated with criminals.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Outline a psychodynamic explanation of offending that uses the concept of an inadequate superego. Explain briefly how an inadequate superego could lead to offending behaviour.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

3 Explain briefly what is meant by a 'candidate gene' explanation of offending behaviour and give one example discussed in the specification. Include a sentence noting whether such genetic influences are deterministic or probabilistic.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Outline briefly what twin and adoption studies contribute to the genetic explanation of offending behaviour, and give one limitation of such evidence.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 16.2 Biological and Psychological Explanations of Offending Behaviour: Test Pack

Question 1

states Lombroso's main claim that some criminals are an atavistic type, biologically different from non-criminals oe	**B1**
gives an example physical feature Lombroso associated with criminality, e.g. a large jaw, sloping forehead or facial asymmetry oe	**B1**

Answer: Lombroso argued some criminals were an atavistic type, biologically different from non-criminals and representing earlier evolutionary stages; he associated criminality with features such as a large jaw, sloping forehead or other facial anomalies.

Question 2

defines an inadequate superego as a weak or underdeveloped internalised moral conscience oe	**M1**
explains that if the superego is weak the ego is less constrained by moral rules, increasing likelihood of antisocial actions oe	**M1**
gives a brief example or consequence, e.g. a child who never internalised parental rules may be more likely to offend as an adult oe	**B1**

Answer: An inadequate superego is a weak internalised moral conscience; if it is underdeveloped the ego is less constrained by moral rules, making antisocial or offending acts more likely, for example if a child did not internalise parental standards they may be more prone to offend later.

Question 3

explains that candidate gene explanations propose particular genes are associated with traits that increase risk of offending, such as impulsivity or aggression oe	**M1**
gives an example, e.g. low activity variants of the MAOA gene linked in some research to aggressive behaviour or increased risk of antisocial outcomes oe	**A1**
notes that gene effects are probabilistic, increasing risk rather than deterministically causing offending oe	**A1**

Answer: Candidate gene explanations claim specific genes are associated with traits that raise risk of offending, for example low activity variants of the MAOA gene have been linked in some studies to increased aggressive behaviour. Such gene effects are probabilistic rather than strictly deterministic.

Question 4

states that twin studies compare concordance rates for offending or antisocial behaviour in monozygotic and dizygotic twins to estimate genetic influence oe	**M1**
states that adoption studies compare offending in adoptees with their biological and adoptive parents to separate genetic from environmental influences oe	**A1**
gives one strength or contribution, e.g. higher concordance in MZ than DZ twins supports a genetic contribution oe	**M1**
gives one limitation, e.g. twins often share similar environments so shared environment confounds can inflate genetic estimates, or adoption placements may not be random oe	**A1**

Answer: Twin studies estimate genetic influence by comparing concordance rates in identical and non-identical twins, while adoption studies compare adoptees with biological and adoptive parents to separate genetic and environmental effects. These studies can suggest a genetic contribution, but are limited because shared environments in twins and non-random adoption placements can confound genetic estimates.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk