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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Biology as a cause of criminality is not a new belief.

Basis of biological positivism comes primarily from the work of the early and highly influential biological criminologists [L.F.G] Lombroso, Ferri and Garofalo, A.K.A the Italian School.

They believed that the scientific study of criminals & criminal behaviour should be the primary focus.

## 2. DEFINE KEY CONCEPT(S)

### 2.1 BIOSOCIAL THEORIES

Biosocial theorists are contemporary biological theorists, and their focus is on biological aspects such as reproduction, genetics & the environment (e.g. head injuries and toxic poisoning).

They do not claim that biology is the cause of delinquency but do believe that it shapes the development of particular traits which are more conducive to crime than others.

Biosocial theorists also recognise that physical, environmental and social conditions work together to produce human behaviour.

## 3. MAIN DISCUSSION

### 3.1 BIOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

These three categories comprise Biosocial Perspectives, however, only the first one will be discussed:

- Genetic
- Biochemical
- Neurophysiological

#### 3.1.1 GENETIC FACTORS [CTA]

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a notion arose that in the same way as physical characteristics, criminality is inherited, and the following studies were done to support this idea.

### (a) CRIMINAL FAMILY STUDIES

DUGDALE's work was the first to focus on criminal family studies.

His research was conducted on the Juke family [of NYC], who were known for criminality, prostitution & poverty – which Dugdale believed were related & fixed (he therefore postulated that criminality would always run in the family).

GODDARD studied 480 of the Kallikak family & found that most were criminals.

Both Dugdale & Goddard emphasized the link between criminality & feeble-mindedness, even though social as well as inherited criminal characteristics had been observed.

In GORING's study on 3000 prisoners, he found them (prisoners) to be inferior to non-offending control groups with regards to mental ability, physical size & especially [regarding] the strong link between criminality of children and their parents [as well as between brothers].

WEST & FARINGTON did a longitudinal study on 1000 males from age 8-30 & found a significant amount of offenders had criminal fathers.

*\*example\**

### (b) TWIN STUDIES

It is essential that a distinction be made between identical & fraternal twins (non-identical) twins.

Identical twins are from a single fertilized egg by a single sperm which splits into half and therefore have the same genes, thus, it is argued that any differences in behaviour is attributed to environmental influence.

Fraternal twins, in contrast, are the result of two eggs simultaneously fertilized by two sperm, therefore like ordinary siblings, they share only 50% of their genes.

The first systematic twin investigation was conducted in the 1920s (on 30 pairs of twins – 13 identical & 17 non-identical) by German physician Johannes Lange.

Christiansen examined official registers in Denmark to see how many from 6000 pairs of twins had a criminal record.

Research on twin delinquency shows evidence that where identical twins are concerned, almost always both parties are involved, whereas the opposite was found to be true for non-identical twins.

*\*example\**

### (c) ADOPTION STUDIES

*It was found that if adoptees displayed delinquent traits, even though contact with biological criminal parents was limited, the behaviour could most likely be attributed to genetics.*

*The study by HUTCHINGS & MEDNICK on male adoptees born in Copenhagen, found that 48% [of young males] with a criminal record [& 37.7% with a record of minor offences] had a birth father with a criminal record.*

*It also found that the adoptee was more likely to have a record if both the birth & adoptive fathers had previous convictions.*

*It was concluded that a genetic element transmitted from parent to child increases a child's predisposition to/of delinquency.*

*There is moderate evidence that antisocial behaviour is influenced by both genetic & environmental factors.*

*\*example\**

### 4. CONCLUSION

*This theory claims that individual behaviour is determined by factors beyond their control.*

*According to Lombroso, criminality was linked to physical characteristics, and following in his footsteps, Goring & Dugdale believed that heredity is connected with delinquency and therefore looked at family history as a potential aspect of criminality.*