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ABSTRACT

Clinical research in the area of severe psychiatric disorders constituted the major focus for the discipline of applied behavior analysis during the early 1960s. Recently, however, there appears to be a notable lack of a behavioral focus within many inpatient psychiatric settings and a relative dearth of published behavioral treatment studies with this population. To examine this trend, a review was conducted of nine journals, within the behavioral literature, which deal with the treatment of severe psychiatric disorders (including schizophrenia, psychotic disorders, dissociative disorders, and personality disorders, among other diagnostic categories). A total of 256 articles published between 1963 and 1988 were reviewed and findings on 9 separate variables were reported. The data indicated that behavioral treatment studies concerned with severe psychiatric disorders significantly decreased in frequency over the past 10 years, following a peak of interest during the 1970s. Subsequent analyses suggest that research in the area of anxiety disorders has replaced the early focus of behavioral researchers on the severe psychiatric disorders. Following an introductory discussion, the bulk of this document consists of the source list or bibliography of the 256 articles identified in the review. (NB)

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APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS IN THE TREATMENT
OF SEVERE PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Introduction

Clinical research in the area of severe psychiatric disorders constituted the major focus for the young discipline of applied behavior analysis during the early 1960's. Recently, however, there appears to be a notable lack of a behavioral focus within many inpatient psychiatric settings, as well as a relative dearth of published behavioral treatment studies with this population. Schizophrenia has even been decried as "behavior therapy's forgotten child" (Bellack, 1986). Concerned with the apparent decreasing interest of applied behavior analysts in this clinical area, Scotti, Trawitzki, and McMorrow (1990) reported on the results from their review of the behavioral literature which deals with the treatment of severe psychiatric disorders (including schizophrenia, psychotic disorders, dissociative disorders, and personality disorders, among other diagnostic categories). They reviewed a total of 256 articles published between 1963, and 1988, and reported their findings on nine separate variables, including participant diagnosis, treatment strategy, use of a functional analysis, and measures of experimental rigor. Their data indicate that behavioral treatment studies with severe psychiatric disorders have significantly decreased in frequency over the past 10 years, following a peak in interest during the 1970's. Subsequent analyses suggested that research in the area of anxiety disorders has replaced the early focus of behavioral researchers on the severe psychiatric disorders. This shift has occurred despite the initial promise of seminal works in this area (e.g., Ayllon, 1963; Ayllon & Azrin, 1968; Ayllon & Haughton, 1964; Ullmann & Krasner, 1965). The present paper provides a source list of the 256 articles identified in that review.

Method

Procedure

Nine journals were selected for review, including representatives of psychiatry (American Journal of Psychiatry, Archives of General Psychiatry), general psychology (Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology), and behavior therapy or applied behavior analysis (Behavior Modification, Behavior Therapy, Behaviour Research and Therapy, Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry). The literature review covered the period from January, 1963, through December, 1988. Initially, each journal was screened by two of the authors (JS and AT) for treatment articles which met the following three criteria: (a) the participants were adults (age 18 years or older) with a diagnosis of severe psychiatric disorder (as defined below); (b) the participants were treated with a recognized behavior therapy technique, as defined by the inclusion of that technique in the Dictionary of Behavior Therapy Techniques (Bellack & Hersen, 1985); and (c) the article reported treatment outcome data in either a descriptive, statistical, or graphic format. Severe psychiatric disorders were defined as including: organic mental disorders (e.g., dementia); schizophrenia; psychotic and delusional disorders; mood disorders (e.g., bipolar disorder, depressive disorder); somatoform disorders (e.g., conversion disorder, somatization disorder); dissociative disorders (e.g., multiple personality, psychogenic fugue); and personality disorders, as defined in the DSM-III-R (APA, 1987).

Results

A total of 256 articles meeting the above criteria were identified. These articles are listed by journal in the bibliography which follows. Reliability (inter-rater agreement) for the identification of relevant articles was calculated on a randomly-selected sample of 36% of the journal

issues, employing the formula: $((Total\ Agreements) / (Total\ Agreements + Total\ Disagreements)) \times 100\%$. Inter-rater agreement was determined to be 90.1% across this sample. All disagreements were jointly considered, and studies meeting the selection criteria were included in the bibliography. Table 1 provides a summary of the number of articles identified within each of the nine journals reviewed.

Discussion

The list of references compiled here in bibliographic form provides a source for articles which describe applied behavioral interventions with the problem behaviors and skill deficits of persons diagnosed with a severe psychiatric disorder. The analysis performed by Scotti, Trawitzki, and McMorrow (1990) on these 256 articles reveals a declining interest in this area of research. They reported that the mean publication frequency for articles in this area of clinical research more than tripled from 4.3 per year in the 1960's to 15.5 per year during the 1970's, but then decreased by half to 7.9 per year during the 1980's. These data, along with other analyses, led Scotti et al. (1990) to conclude that there had been a flight by behavior analysts from the treatment of severe psychiatric disorders. They subsequently hypothesized about the causes for that flight, and provided recommendations for continued research in this important clinical area.

The 272 treatment studies contained within the 256 articles in this bibliography cover a range of diagnostic classifications, target behaviors, and interventions. Overall, 61% of the studies included persons with schizophrenia or psychotic disorders, and 28% included persons with mood disorders. Other diagnostic categories included: organic mental disorders (13%), personality disorders (10%), and dissociative disorders (3%). (These percentages sum to more than 100% due to many articles including participants

from several diagnostic categories.) Scotti et al. (1990) provide similar data for the categories of target behaviors and treatment techniques, as well as other analyses of interest to the researcher in this area. The bibliography provided below is meant to foster new behavioral research in the area of severe psychiatric disorders by providing a source list which can be readily accessed and employed by clinical researchers.

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Table 1

Total Number of Articles per Journal

<u>Journal</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
American Journal of Psychiatry	10
Archives of General Psychiatry	8
Behavior Modification	13
Behavior Therapy	38
Behaviour Research and Therapy	45
Journal of Abnormal Psychology	17
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis	23
Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry	59
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	43
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	<u>TOTAL:</u> 256

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