Abstract

The current review explores epigenetics-the way in which the environment influences genetic expression-to examine the crucial role the environment plays in mediating genetic effects on behavior. Specifically, this paper examines epigenetics with respect to three different mental health issues: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), postpartum depression (PPD), and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Much research in these areas has shown that domestic environmental influences impact the onset of these disorders. The purpose of this review is to show how genetics and the environment interact to alter genetic expression and ultimately, behavior. By doing so, this review justifies the need to study epigenetics and proposes ideas for future areas of research within the field. By understanding how the environment and genetics interact, clinicians can develop appropriate clinical interventions to aid those with ASD, PPD, and PTSD.

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