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Developmental psychology is the scientific study of how and why the thought processes, emotions, and behaviors of humans change over the course of their lives. [1] Some credit Charles Darwin with conducting the first systematic study within the rubric of developmental psychology, having published in 1877 a short paper detailing the development of young birds. [2] However, the scientific study of human development has been a part of the human sciences since the beginning of the human species. In addition to studying cognition, developmental psychologists have also come to focus on affective, behavioral, moral, social, and neural development. Developmental psychologists who study children use a number of research methods. For example, they make observations of children in natural settings such as preschools [175] and engage them in experimental tasks. [176] Such tasks often resemble specially designed games and activities that are both enjoyable for the child and scientifically useful. Developmental researchers have even devised clever methods to study the mental processes of infants. [177] In addition to studying children, developmental psychologists also study aging and processes throughout the life span, including old age. [178] These psychologists draw on the full range of psychological theories to inform their research. [173] Main article: Behavioural genetics All researched psychological traits are influenced by both genes and environment, varying degrees. [179][180] These two sources of influence are often confounded in observational research of individuals and families. An example of this confounding can be shown in the transmission of depression from a depressed mother to her offspring. A theory based on environmental transmission would hold that an offspring, by virtue of their having a problematic rearing environment managed by a depressed mother, is at risk for developing depression. On the other hand, a hereditary theory would hold that depression is an offspring is influenced as some extent by genes passed to the child from the mother. Genes and environment in these simple transmission models are completely confounded. A depressed mother may both carry genes that contribute to depression in her offspring and also create a rearing environment that increases the child's risk of depression. [181] Because of this, hereditary theories that have been advanced in the past have been difficult to study. However, the advent of molecular genetic techniques such as microarray and genome sequencing technologies allows researchers to measure participant DNA variation directly, and test whether individual genetic variants within genes are associated with psychological traits and psychopathology through methods including genome-wide association studies. One goal of such research is similar to that in population genetics: once a causal gene is discovered biological research can be conducted to understand how that gene influences the phenotype. One major result of genetic association studies is the general finding that psychological traits and psychopathology, as well as complex medical diseases, are highly polygenic. [182][183][184][185][186] where a large number (on the order of hundreds to thousands) of genetic variants, each of small effect, contribute to individual differences in the behavioral trait or propensity to the disorder. Active research continues to work toward understanding the genetic and environmental bases of behavior and their interaction. Further information: Outline of psychology, List of psychology disciplines, Applied psychology, and Subfields of psychology Psychology encompasses many subfields and includes different approaches to the study of behavior and the mind. [187] [188] [189] [190] [191] [192] [193] [194] [195] [196] [197] [198] [199] [200] [201] [202] [203] [204] [205] [206] [207] [208] [209] [210] [211] [212] [213] [214] [215] [216] [217] [218] [219] [220] [221] [222] [223] [224] [225] [226] [227] [228] [229] [230] [231] [232] [233] [234] [235] [236] [237] [238] [239] [240] [241] [242] [243] [244] [245] [246] [247] [248] [249] [250] [251] [252] [253] [254] [255] [256] [257] [258] [259] [260] [261] [262] [263] [264] [265] [266] [267] [268] [269] [270] [271] [272] [273] [274] [275] [276] [277] [278] [279] [280] [281] [282] [283] [284] [285] [286] [287] [288] [289] [290] [291] [292] [293] [294] [295] [296] [297] [298] [299] [300] [301] [302] [303] [304] [305] [306] [307] [308] [309] [310] [311] [312] [313] [314] [315] [316] [317] [318] [319] [320] [321] [322] [323] [324] [325] [326] [327] [328] [329] [330] [331] [332] [333] [334] [335] [336] [337] [338] [339] [340] [341] [342] [343] [344] [345] [346] [347] [348] [349] [350] [351] [352] 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