Sources


Emil Kraepelin was a physician who studied people with mental illness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in modern-day Germany. Kraepelin’s examination and description of the symptoms and outcomes of mental illness formed the basis for his classification of psychiatric disorders into two main groups, dementia praecox, now called schizophrenia, and manic-depressive psychosis, now called bipolar disorder. He was one of the first physicians to suggest that those researching mental illness should gain scientific knowledge only through close observation and description. However, Kraepelin also believed that genetics played a role in the development and course of mental illness and characterized mentally ill people as weak-willed, which some have argued contributed to stigma about mental illnesses that persist today. Although some historians have pointed out issues with Kraepelin’s teachings, Kraepelin helped to establish psychiatry as a clinical science, which prompted future experimental investigations into mental illness.

Subject
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Psychiatry in Literature
Bipolar and Related Disorders
Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders
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Topic
People
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