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Psychopathology of suicide bombers - A psychiatric perspective



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In recent years, suicide attacks have become a modality of terrorism with increasing application and fatality. This phenomenon has emerged as one of the deadliest threats to societies and there are numerous countries that have been hit around the world, including Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Sri Lanka, Iran, United States, Spain, United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, and the list goes on. Suicide terrorist attacks, while becoming ever more popular in recent political and religious warfare, are nothing new in human history. Based on a number of articles, papers and researches in recent times, the phenomenon still remains elusive. From the vintage point of understanding about terrorism (De la Corte, et al, 2007, Qureshi 2008), this presentation outlines a psychosocial explanation of suicide terrorist attacks from the psychiatric perspective bringing clues from latest brain structural and functional imaging studies fusing with biopsychosocial holistic viewpoints. Questions are of course pervasive, omnipresent and numerous. Why do people become suicide bombers? Are these people 'mentally deranged'? Do they have some mental vulnerability which is exposed and triggered at a particular point? Are there any psychopathological clues or even more interesting, any neurobiological markers? Do certain personality characteristics are more prone to such acts? Does it run in the families? And last but not the least, can Psychiatry help?

Biography

Sohail Qureshi is working as an Inpatient Consultant Psychiatrist in the NHS for females with mental health issues and complex personality and trauma background. He is also the Medical Director of ID Medical, a leading national locum agency providing millions of work hours to NHS and private health sector. He has studied for Master's in Forensic Psychiatry at St. George's University as well as at Kings College London. He has been studying and speaking on the unusual phenomenon of terrorism in the context of suicide bombing in recent years from a psychiatric standpoint.

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