

***How our understanding of Melancholia
and approaches to treatment have changed
over time.***

For much of human history, melancholia was a mysterious affliction once attributed to an excess of black bile. later seen as a spiritual crisis and now understood as a complex mood disorder shaped by biology, psychology, and environment. A patient in ancient Greece might have been prescribed exercise and diet to rebalance their humors under the philosophy of Hippocrates, a patient in the Renaissance, prayer and seclusion in the asylums and a patient today would be prescribed medication, cognitive therapy and the opportunity to develop tools and skills to reflect on their experience and even self soothe. As knowledge expanded across medicine and millennia, so did the approach to treating those who suffered from it. Tracking this evolution brings to light not only shifting scientific theories but also cultural attitude changes toward mental health itself. This essay discovers how our understanding of melancholia and the methods used to treat it have transformed from ancient theory to modern clinical practice.

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