

Analyzing Las Vegas shooter Stephen Paddock's brain might illuminate 'psychopathy'

It's easy to chalk up [Las Vegas mass shooter Stephen] Paddock's horrific actions simply to "evil," as politicians and media are inclined to do. But if it's possible to gain insight into his actions at a biological level, we might be in a better position to fend off such tragedies in the future.

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[A] tumor isn't the only thing that can cause such changes in behavior: strokes or a traumatic brain injury can do the same. And one disorder in particular deserves mention: frontotemporal lobar degeneration (FTLD). Although the name is long, this simply refers to a deterioration of two lobes of the brain, the frontal and the temporal.

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Patients with FTD often display altered moral feelings, diminished empathy and disinhibited behavior. Among other things, it affects a part of the brain known as the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, one of the key areas involved in moral emotions about others. Damage to that area is sometimes referred to in the medical literature as an "acquired psychopathy."

Finally, we can't rule out the possibility that Paddock's erratic behavior resulted from some nefarious combination of problems: for example, there's no reason one cannot be psychopathic, take drugs, alcohol, or medications, and have FTD as well.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The mystery of Stephen Paddock's brain](#)