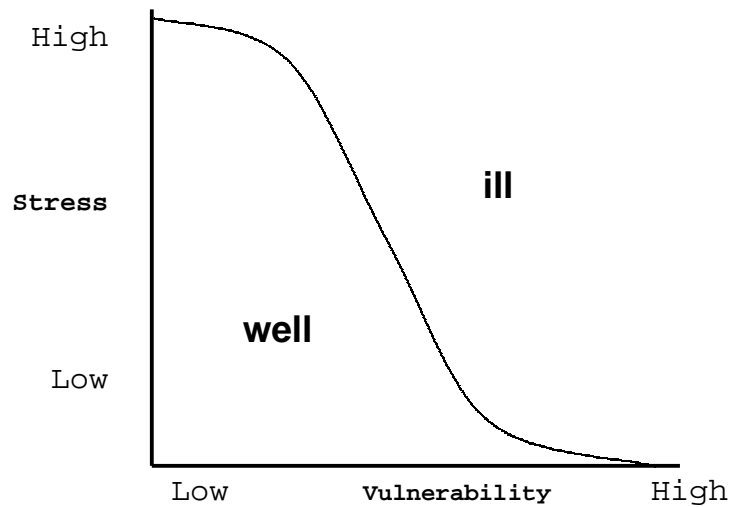


Stress Factors and Schizophrenia

The diathesis stress model suggests that schizophrenia results from an **interaction** between genetic vulnerability and environmental stress. In other words, environmental stress is required to trigger the disorder in those so disposed. One version of the diathesis stress model (Zubin & Spring, 1977) theorises the relationship like this:

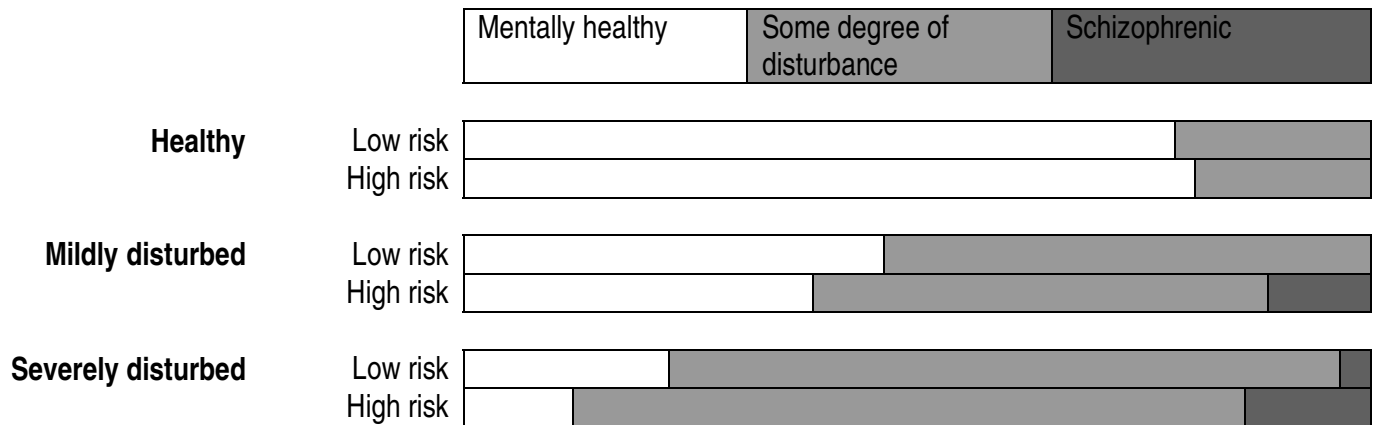


What does this graph suggest about the nature of the interaction between vulnerability and stress in schizophrenia?

How well do the findings we have looked at regarding urbanicity and ethnicity fit in with this model?

Family Stress and Schizophrenia

Below is a graph summarising some of the main findings from a research study by Tienari et al (1990). They carried out a **prospective study**. Adopted children were classified as **high risk** if their biological mother was schizophrenic and **low risk** if she was not. The families they were adopted into were classified as **healthy, mildly disturbed** and **severely disturbed** according to the nature of their habitual interactions. Over the course of many years (the study is still going on) the children were tracked and their mental health status assessed.



To what extent are the findings from Tienari et al's study in line with the predictions of the diathesis stress model?

What conclusions do you draw from the evidence as a whole about the causes of schizophrenia?

