Abnormal Psychology
PSYCH 40111

Classification and Diagnosis

The purpose of classification
- facilitates communication
- research
- prognosis
- guide treatment

Diagnostic Systems
- Symptom
  - Refers to an observable behavior or state
- Syndrome
  - Constellation of symptoms that occur together or co-vary over time
- Disorder
  - Cluster of symptoms that are not accounted for by a more pervasive condition
- Disease
  - A disorder where the underlying etiology is known
DSM-IV Classification System

- DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) is a revised diagnostic classification system created by the American Psychiatric Association
- DSM-IV was designed to more accurately classify psychiatric disorder (relative to earlier DSM versions)
- DSM-IV does not specify cause
  - avoids any suggestion as to the cause of a disorder unless the cause has been definitely established

Five Axes of DSM-IV

I  All categories except personality disorder and mental retardation
II  Personality disorders and mental retardation
III  General medical conditions
IV  Psychosocial and environmental problems
V  Current level of functioning

Classification Critiques

1. Relies too heavily on categorization (as opposed to dimensionality)
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2. Relies too heavily on labeling and ignores uniqueness
3. May reflect gender and cultural bias
Gender Differences in Diagnosis

Explanations for higher rates in women:
- Biology
- Gender socialization
- Diagnostic system bias
- Women are more likely to report

DSM-IV Culture-Bound Syndromes
- Amok
- Ataque de nervios
- Hwa-byung or Wool-hwa-byung
- Latah
- Pibloktoq
- Taijin Kyofusho
- Zar

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3. May reflect gender and cultural bias
4. Often overlap of conditions in one individual
5. May be difficult to distinguish between disorders
Reliability

- **Reliability** refers to consistency of measurement
- **Types of reliability:**
  - **Interrater reliability** refers to the degree of agreement between 2 observers
  - **Test-retest reliability** refers to the extent to which scores are similar for a person being observed twice or taking the same test twice
  - **Internal consistency reliability** examines whether the items on a test are related

Validity

- **Validity** assesses the extent to which a test or instrument fulfills its intended purpose
- **Types of validity:**
  - **Content validity** refers to whether a measure adequately samples the domain of interest
  - **Criterion validity** refers to whether a measure is associated in an expected way with another measure (the criterion)
  - **Construct validity** refers to whether a measure of a construct is supported by other measures of that construct
Assessments

**Diagnostic Interview**
- Unstructured clinical interview
- Structured diagnostic interview (SCID)

**Personality Tests**
- Objective (MMPI)
- Projective (Rorschach)

**Cognitive Tests**
- Intelligence (WAIS, WISC)
- Neuropsychological (Bender-Gestalt)

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Assessments

**Behavioral Assessment**
- Observational and self-monitoring
- Self-report (Beck Depression Inventory)

**Biological Assessment**
- Neurobiological (fMRI, PET)
- Psychophysiological (heart rate, skin conductance, startle response, EKG)
- Blood, urine, saliva

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**Is Human Behavior Consistent?**

A key issue in clinical assessment is the extent to which human behavior is consistent/variable over time

- **Trait theory:** people possess certain levels of characteristics that remain constant over time
- **Mischel:** argued that traits are not important determinants of a person’s behavior
  - People are inconsistent across situations
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Research Methods in Psychopathology

The Scientific Method

- Science is the pursuit of systematized knowledge through observation
- Objectives
  - description
  - prediction
  - control
  - understanding

Naturalistic Designs

- A case study includes historical and biographical information on a single person
- Epidemiological studies often use surveys to provide info about the nature and scope of mental health problems across large populations or regions
The Correlational Method
- The **correlational method** examines the relationship between or among two or more variables.
- The variables are assessed as they exist in nature (no experimental manipulation).
- Correlational studies seek to determine the magnitude and direction of a relationship among variables.
  - *e.g.* stress and body weight.

The Experiment
- The **experiment** allows for determination of a causal relation between two variables.
- An experiment involves:
  - random assignment of subject to experimental conditions.
  - manipulation of an *independent variable* (IV: believed to be a causal variable).
  - measurement of a *dependent variable* (DV is assumed to be controlled by the IV).
Internal vs. External Validity

- **Internal validity** assesses whether the differences between groups is due to the influence of the IV or some other factor.
- **External validity** refers to the extent to which the results of an experiment can be generalized beyond the conditions of the experiment.