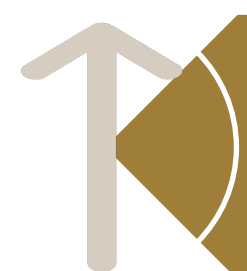


Introduction

- The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) has served as the gold standard for diagnosis and management of mental health and developmental disorders.
 - Diagnoses have shaped lived experiences and access to care.
- In the DSM-5, Asperger's and autism were grouped under the term Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
 - Change due to inconsistent application of diagnostic criteria.
- Concerns voiced by the Asperger's community in response to the proposed changes included:



Inability to access support services.



Heightened stigma related to the term autism.



Loss of identity associated with the Asperger's terminology.

- In 2013, Cascio posited that three theories may explain the fate of Asperger's after its reclassification under the *DSM-5*:

Transient Mental Illness (Nadesan)

- Diagnosis that may have had temporary meaning that has now been lost.

Diagnosis You Have to Fight to Get (Dumit)

- People identify with Asperger's as a diagnosis, but its meaning is no longer recognized by clinical professionals.

Demedicalization (Conrad)

- Asperger's is no longer thought to be a disorder, but a personality trait that does not need to be treated or cured.

Objective

- To identify which theory best captures what we see in the literature with respect to the fate of Asperger's syndrome after its removal from the *DSM-5*.

Methods

- Non-scoping literature review, including peer reviewed articles, theses, and dissertations.

Inclusion Criteria

- Empirical Research
 - Perspectives on individuals on the spectrum
 - Involves perceptions of Asperger's
 - Addresses DSM-5 change

Search Methods

- Books on Autism, Neurodiversity, and Social Sciences
- Search Terms: ("DSM- 5" OR "DSM V" OR identity) AND (Asperger*)

Results

Eligible Articles

- Six peer-reviewed articles.
- One book chapter.
- One indexed doctoral dissertation.

Demedicalization

"Describing oneself as autistic is an extremely important and positive assertion about oneself, it means that one feels complete and whole as one is."

A Diagnosis You Have to Fight to Get

- Concerns about losing services and some children lost access:

"They said he was too high functioning. That even though we have had a couple of episodes where my son had gotten out of control and had physically attacked me...they didn't think he needed [Therapeutic Support Staff] TSS on a long-term basis or even a short-term basis."

- Lack of school system understanding and knowledge leading to struggles with the school system to obtain services.

Conclusions

- Few publications addressed change despite fears.
- Most publications focused on impacts on diagnostic rates with fewer ASD diagnosis under the new criteria.
- Many pieces support the demedicalization theory while some support the diagnosis you have to fight to get theory.
- Majority of works explicitly or implicitly rejected the idea that Asperger's is "transient"; it remained meaningful as a separate concept from autism, at least in early publications.
- More research should explicitly investigate identification with the Asperger's label, especially in light of the growing infamy of the eponymous doctor.

Explanations for a mixed pattern in data:

Asperger became a term of identity prior to the *DSM-5* change.

Restrictive *DSM-5* criteria may be a barrier entry into the medical system.

Limited publications restricts conclusions about diagnostic trends.

Intentional distancing from label due to Hans Asperger's connection to the Nazi movement.

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