

Substance use disorders – a question of definition?

Comparing DSM-IV to DSM-5

Daniela Piontek¹, Elena Gomes de Matos¹ & Ludwig Kraus^{1,2}

¹IFT Institut für Therapieforschung, München

²Centre for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs, SoRAD, Stockholm University

Background. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association launched the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the basis for assessing mental disorders in international research. For substance use disorders (SUD), research indicates rather low concordance between DSM-5 and the former edition (DSM-IV). However, the vast majority of studies is from English speaking countries and focuses on alcohol. We compare SUD diagnoses between DSM-IV and DSM-5 in Germany on a variety of substances. **Methods.** The 2012 Epidemiological Survey of Substance Abuse was conducted in the general population aged 18 to 64 (n = 9.084). DSM-IV and DSM-5 criteria were assessed for disorders related to alcohol, nicotine, illicit drugs (cannabis, amphetamines, cocaine), and pharmaceuticals (analgesics, sedatives/hypnotics). Prevalence rates and parameters of concordance will be estimated. **Results.** Preliminary results suggest that compared to DSM-IV, DSM-5 leads to higher prevalence rates for disorders related to alcohol and nicotine, similar prevalence rates for illicit drugs, and a lower prevalence for analgesics. Sensitivity was especially low for nicotine (49.91) and alcohol (63.03). Other parameters of concordance were high for all substances except analgesics. **Conclusions.** As in other countries, in Germany population estimates for alcohol and nicotine use disorders increased following adaptations in the DSM. About a third of those with a DSM-5 alcohol use disorder under DSM-5 were not affected under DSM-IV. For illicit drugs, concordance between DSM-IV and DSM-5 was high. The results demonstrate that epidemiological estimations of the prevalence of mental disorders depend highly on their precise definition.