

Classification and Diagnosis of

Classification and Diagnosis of Psychological Disorders

Psychological Disorders

1. Purpose of Classification

- Provides a common language for clinicians, guides treatment choice, and enables research comparability.

2. Major Classification Systems

- **DSM-5** (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, American Psychiatric Association) - widely used in the US and much of the world.
- **ICD-11** (International Classification of Diseases, WHO) - used globally, including in most African health systems.

3. The Diagnostic Process

- Clinical interview, standardized questionnaires/rating scales, behavioral observation, and sometimes psychological testing.

4. Key Concepts

- **Comorbidity**: presence of two or more disorders at once.
- **Differential diagnosis**: ruling out similar-looking disorders.

5. Criticisms of Classification

- Risk of over-diagnosis, cultural bias in criteria, and the stigma attached to diagnostic labels.

6. Reliability and Validity

- A good diagnostic system must be reliable (consistent between clinicians) and valid (accurately reflects the real disorder).