Overview of DSM-5: Autism Spectrum Disorder

Courtney Burnette, PhD
Clinical Psychologist
UNM Center for Development and Disability
Department of Pediatrics
September 20, 2013

Objectives
• Recognize the changes from DSM-IV TR to DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder
• Become familiar with new diagnostic specifiers
• Become familiar with new severity ratings

Why was it changed?
• APA intends the DSM to reflect most current research and practice
• Last revision – 2000
• Confusion and inconsistent application of previous PDD diagnoses
Why was it changed?

- Improve sensitivity and specificity
- Provide more accurate and descriptive information (Specifiers)
  - Co-existing conditions and genetic or medical diagnoses
  - Severity level (based on level of supports)
  - Intellectual functioning
  - Language level

Changes

**Pervasive Developmental Disorder**
- 3 Diagnoses:
  - Autistic Disorder
  - Asperger’s Disorder
  - PDD-NOS
- 3 “categories” of symptoms
  - Social Interaction (2/4)
  - Communication
  - RRB

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- 1 Diagnosis
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 2 “categories” of symptoms
  - Social Communication (3/3)
  - RRB (2/4)

**Changes**

- No indication about sensory differences
- Language delay criteria
- Included Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Retts Disorder
- Added hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input
- Delay in language removed
- Removed Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Retts Disorder
Changes

**Pervasive Developmental Disorder**
- Must be present before age 3 years

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- Present in the early developmental period but may not become fully manifest until social demands exceed limited capacities, or may be masked by learned strategies in later life

Diagnostic Specifiers

**DSM-5 299.0 Autism Spectrum Disorder**

- Level of Support required (i.e., Severity)
- With or Without intellectual impairment
- With or Without language impairment
- Associated with known medical or genetic condition or environmental factor
- Associated with another neurodevelopmental, mental or behavioral disorder (e.g., ADHD)
- With catatonia
Diagnostic Specifiers

DSM-5 299.0 Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Level of Support required (i.e., Severity)
- With or Without intellectual impairment
- With or Without language impairment
- Associated with known medical or genetic condition or environmental factor
- Associated with another neurodevelopmental, mental or behavioral disorder (e.g., ADHD)
- With catatonia

Severity Level: Social-Communication

Level 1: requiring support
- Without supports, deficits in social communication cause noticeable impairments; e.g., atypical or unsuccessful responses to social overtures

Level 2: requiring substantial support
- Marked deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication, apparent even with supports

Level 3: requiring very substantial support
- Limited initiation and minimal response to social overtures

Severity Level: Restricted, repetitive behaviors

Level 1: requiring support
- Causes significant interference with functioning in one or more contexts

Level 2: requiring substantial support
- Appear frequently and interfere with functioning across a variety of contexts

Level 3: requiring very substantial support
- Extreme difficulty with change, markedly interfere with functioning in all spheres
Additional Changes

- Can now have comorbid diagnoses:
  - Language Disorders
  - Global Developmental Delay (under 5 years old)
  - Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

- Axial system eliminated

Sample Diagnosis 1

**DSM-IV-TR**

Axis I: Autistic Disorder (299.00)
Axis II: Intellectual Disability, Mild (317.0)
Axis III: Seizure Disorder, NOS (780.39)
Axis IV: school difficulties, sibling conflict
Axis V: GAF: 55

Sample Diagnosis 1

**DSM-5**

299.00 Autism Spectrum Disorder associated with Seizure Disorder:

- Currently requiring substantial supports for deficits in social communication and support for restricted, repetitive behaviors.

- With accompanying intellectual impairment (Intellectual Disability, Mild, 317.0)

- With accompanying language impairment (phrase speech, delays in receptive and expressive communication

- Not associated with any known genetic cause (appointment pending)
### Sample Diagnosis 2

**DSM-5**

299.00 Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Not associated with a known medical disorder

- Requiring **substantial support** for deficits in social communication and requiring **support** for restricted, repetitive behaviors

- With accompanying language impairment (Fluent Language; Language Disorder, 315.39)

- Without accompanying intellectual impairment (Low Average Verbal and Average Nonverbal cognitive abilities)

- Not associated with other neurodevelopmental, mental, or behavioral disorders

### Sample Diagnosis 3

**DSM-5**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (299.0)

- Not associated with known medical or genetic condition, or environmental factor (consider genetic testing if not already completed)

- Requiring **very substantial support** for deficits in social communication and **very substantial support** for restricted, repetitive behaviors

- With accompanying intellectual impairment: Intellectual Disability – Severe (318.1)

- With accompanying language impairment: very limited spontaneous speech, mostly delayed echolalia

### Sample Diagnosis 4

**DSM-5**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (299.0)

- Not associated with known medical or genetic condition, or environmental factor (referral made for genetics evaluation)

- Requiring **very substantial support** for deficits in social communication and **very substantial support** for restricted, repetitive behaviors

- With accompanying intellectual impairment: Global Developmental Delay (319.0)

- With accompanying language impairment: very limited spontaneous speech, mostly delayed echolalia

---

A University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services (UCEDD)
New Diagnosis

- Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder
  - Children who demonstrate social-communicative impairments without repetitive behaviors / restricted interests
    - Thought that this diagnosis will capture some children formerly diagnosed with PDD-NOS
    - Separate diagnosis to ensure access to services and not lost under “NOS” classification

Intellectual Disability

- Global Developmental Delay
  - Children under 5 years old who demonstrate delays in intellectual development

- Intellectual Disability
  - Mild
  - Moderate
  - Severe
  - Profound
  - Unspecified

- IQ and adaptive behavior
  - Severity dependent on severity of adaptive functioning deficits, not IQ score
    - Mild
    - Moderate
    - Severe
    - Profound
    - Unspecified

- Global Developmental Delay (under age 5)
No more Asperger’s?

- Asperger’s Disorder is no longer a distinct diagnostic category
- "...identity that represents this an individual’s specific strengths and challenges"
- New diagnostic structure allows for descriptive information to convey these strengths and challenges
  - More individualized for everyone receiving a diagnosis

How does this affect people with ASD and their families?

Will we need to get a new evaluation for diagnosis?

- A person with a well-established diagnosis of Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s or PDD-NOS does not need a new evaluation – they should be given a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder

How does this affect people with ASD and their families?

Where am I on the spectrum?

 Previous diagnoses did not provide information about individual’s current level of functioning, the impact of autism symptoms or need for support.
However…

Programs (public schools, community services, DD Waiver) establish criteria for acceptable evaluations to determine eligibility for services.

However…

Diagnosis vs. Educational Eligibility

- Eligibility for special education services under IDEA 2004, NM PED regulations and recommendations for assessment
- Eligibility of autism includes characteristics of either Autistic Disorder, PDD-NOS or Asperger’s plus need for specialized instruction

Medical Diagnosis vs. Educational Eligibility

- Fundamental distinction between a medical diagnosis and an educational determination is the impact the condition has on student learning
  - Medical evaluation = Diagnosis
  - Educational evaluation = Category of eligibility for services
### Future Directions

- Need to know more about how the new criteria will effect:
  - Those who are already diagnosed
  - Those who are receiving diagnoses under new criteria

- Social Pragmatic Language Disorder

- Impact of service delivery
  - Educational programs
  - State and Federal programs