

Mental illness

PH1.7: Identify mental illnesses by their symptoms

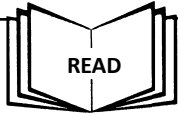


Use the following data table to answer the questions below.

Substance Use Disorder, Mental Health Problems, and Mental Health Treatment among Gulf State Disaster Area Residents Aged 18 or Older: Percentages, July 2004 to June 2005 (Pre Hurricane Katrina) and 2006 (Post Hurricane Katrina).

Mental Health Problem or Treatment	Gulf State Disaster Area		Remainder of United States	
	July 2004 to June 2005	2006	July 2004 to June 2005	2006
Serious Psychological Distress	12.2%	10.7%	11.5%	11.3%
Major Depressive Episode	7.4%	7.4%	7.5%	7.2%
Substance Use Disorder	10.7%	9.1%	9.1%	9.3%
Receipt of Mental Health Treatment or Counseling	13.1%	11.0%	13.0%	13.0%
Unmet Need for Mental Health Treatment or Counseling	4.8%	3.8%	5.0%	4.8%

1. What percentages of the population in the gulf state disaster area and in the remainder of the US had major depressive episode in 2006, respectively?
2. What percentages of the population in the gulf state disaster area had a substance use disorder in 2004-2005 and 2006, respectively?
3. Estimate, to the nearest whole number, the percentage of people who had serious psychological distress in 2006 in the **entire** United States.
4. After Hurricane Katrina, what happened to the percentage of people with the Gulf State Disaster Area with unmet needs for mental health treatment? What might be one reason for this trend?



A Deeper Understanding of Mental Illness

Mental health professionals base their diagnosis and treatment of mental illness on the symptoms that a person exhibits. The goal for these professionals in treating a patient is to relieve the symptoms that are interfering with the person’s life so that the person can function well.

We can all be sad at times in our lives. We have all seen movies about the madman and his crime spree because he had a mental illness. We sometimes even make jokes about people being crazy or nuts, even though we know that we shouldn’t. We have all had some exposure to mental illness, but do we really understand it or know what it is? Many of our preconceptions are incorrect. **A mental illness can be defined as a health condition that changes a person’s thinking, feelings, or behavior (or all three) and that causes the person distress and difficulty in functioning.** *As with many diseases, mental illness is severe in some cases and mild in others.* Individuals who have a mental illness don’t necessarily look like they are sick, especially if their illness is mild. Other individuals may show more explicit symptoms such as confusion, agitation, or withdrawal. Each illness alters a person’s thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors in distinct ways.

Source: <http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements/nih5/mental/guide/info-mental-b.htm>

How are Mental Illnesses Diagnosed?

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV-TR* (DSM) uses a **five axes classification system to diagnose disorders** and guide their treatment. *Axis I* lists clinical disorders (basically the problem that has brought the patient in for treatment). An example would be a phobia or depression. *Axis II* lists long-standing conditions, such as developmental disorders, learning disabilities, and personality disorders which might interact with the disorder on Axis I. *Axis III* lists medical conditions which may contribute to the Axis I disorder. For instance, open-heart surgery patients often experience depression due to the physical trauma of the major surgery. *Axis IV* lists social and environmental factors which may contribute to the disorder, such as a divorce, relocation (moving) or a death in the family. *Axis V* is a Global Assessment of Functioning (a survey) which scores how well the patient copes with the disorder on a day-to-day basis in a variety of situations and environments.

Source: <http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/homepage/class/Psy301/Salinas/06PsychologicalDisorders.htm>

SUMMARIZE: Using this information on the DSM, take brief notes on each of the axes in the table below:

Axis	Types of Conditions Listed on that Axis, and Examples of the Condition
I	
II	
III	
IV	
V	



According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, as many as 26 percent of Americans suffer from a mental illness. A smaller percentage (about 6%) suffer from a serious mental illness.

This percentage may seem startling to you. This lack of awareness of the prevalence of mental illness may be attributed, in part, to the STIGMATIZATION of mental illness. Many people are also unaware of the large variety of mental illnesses that exist. In the table below, some mental illness categories are listed with examples.

Mental Illness Category	Examples
Anxiety disorders	panic attacks, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder
Mood disorders	bipolar disorder, depression
Personality disorders	schizophrenia
Attention disorders	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
Eating disorders	anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa
Drug abuse	alcoholism, abuse of performance enhancing drugs such as amphetamines, heroin, cocaine, and barbiturates
Alzheimer’s disease	most common form of dementia (a progressive & fatal disease)



Choose one of the mental illnesses above that you think you are most familiar with. Then list all of the symptoms you know that can be present with that mental illness. It is okay to make guesses and infer here. Think of examples (personal or through media representations) of the illness if you get stuck.

Mental Illness:

Symptoms:



With a partner, talk about the following questions:

1. Do you think your list of symptoms above was accurate?
2. Do you think everyone who has the mental illness you chose exhibits these symptoms?
3. Do you think you could accurately diagnose someone with this mental illness given their symptoms?
4. What makes diagnosing mental illness difficult?



Only a medical professional can diagnose a mental illness. However, it is important to be aware of the symptoms so that you can seek help if you or a loved one noticing symptoms that seem concerning. In order to develop our skills and understanding, we will simplify some of these illnesses and the patients who experience them as we look at scenarios. But it is important to remember how complex mental illnesses are, how they vary from person to person, and how they must be diagnosed by a trained medical professional.

The following table lists **some** of the symptoms of some common mental illnesses:

Mental Illness	Symptoms
Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)	constant worrying or obsession about small or large concerns, restlessness, fatigue, fear, trouble sleeping or concentrating, irritability, muscle tension or aches, sweating, nausea, diarrhea
Phobias	panic, fear, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, trembling, nausea, or dizziness (in response to a situation or object)
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	unwanted thoughts that take control, unreasonable behaviors, typically these follow a theme such as washing and cleaning, counting, checking, orderliness, disturbing impulses, etc.
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	following a life-threatening or disturbing event: re-experiencing symptoms (flashbacks, nightmares); avoidance symptoms (feeling emotionally numb, avoidance of certain triggers/ places, guilt, depression, or worry, difficulty remembering); and hyper-arousal symptoms (easily startled, tense or "on edge," difficulty sleeping, angry outbursts)
Bipolar Disorder	shift between extreme emotions (from mania to depression); Mania can include euphoria, inflated self-esteem, poor judgment, rapid speed, racing thoughts, etc.)
Schizophrenia	delusions (beliefs not based in reality & usually involve misinterpreting perception or experience), disturbances in mood, & behavior, hallucinations, difficulty organizing thoughts, disordered speech
Anorexia nervosa	intense fear of gaining weight, restriction of food or types of food, extreme weight loss due to restriction of food intake, weighing less than 85% of expected weight, distorted body image, exercising too much, bradycardia (slower than normal heart rate), dry skin, hair loss, low body temperature
Bulimia nervosa	pattern of bingeing (overeating) and purging (vomiting, fasting, exercising too much, or misusing laxatives or diuretics), being ashamed of overeating, fear of gaining weight, low self-esteem and poor body image, sneaking or hiding food, usually within normal weight, dehydration, erosion of tooth enamel



With a partner, choose one of the mental illnesses above. Review its lists of symptoms, considering which symptoms are easily visible to others and which would be difficult or impossible for another person to detect without disclosure from the person who is mentally ill. Discuss how this impacts the recognition and diagnosis of this mental illness.



Read the vignettes below and choose the best diagnosis based on the mental illnesses in the table on p. 4.

Vignette #1: A 19-year old female is brought in to the ER by her mother. The chief complaint is a change in behavior and mental state. She recently began college and has lived in a dorm for four months now, but during her visit home for winter break she was uncharacteristically argumentative, talkative, and in a “goofy” mood. She has been treated for depression for the last two years. When questioned, she admits to increased alcohol intake. She also admits that she hasn’t attended classes in a month and has been staying up extremely late blogging. When questioned, she has gotten very defensive and has accused her parents of trying to “overmedicate her” and “ruining her happiness.”

Which mental illness does this patient seem to have? _____

Vignette #2: A 41-year old male admits to an intense fear of germs at his routine physical exam. He describes fear of touching doorknobs, bathrooms, toilet seats, and public spaces. He is a vigilant hand washer and has red, cracked hands. He recently got divorced because his wife could not understand his impulsive behavior. He estimates he spends several hours per day cleaning and re-cleaning his apartment in addition to constant bathing and washing. He does not admit that this thoughts and behaviors are irrational.

Which mental illness does this patient seem to have? _____



Choose any mental illness. Write a vignette (approx. 1–2 paragraphs) about a patient with that mental illness. Include all important information and at least three symptoms consistent with that mental illness.