

Topic 8_Personality Disorders

Features common to all personality disorders;

- **Personality disorder**: enduring and pervasive pattern of inner experience and behaviour that results in maladaptive personal and social functioning.
- Emerge during **adolescence**, endure through adult life
 - Can become muted in middle or older age

Categorical system of classification or dimensional assessment of personality disorder

Categorical approach

- Easier to **conceptualise**
- More consistent in terms of **treatment** decisions
- Encourages clinicians to view personality disorders as distinct “things” rather than a point at which **society** decides that a particular way of relating to the world has become a problem.

Dimensional approach

- Less likely to discard **relevant** information
- More **accurate** and flexible
- More **universal**
- **Big 5 model**: views personality disorders as extremes of normal personality dimensions

Clinical features of each DSM-5 personality disorder;

Cluster A, with odd, eccentric features

- **paranoid personality disorder**, characterised by suspicion and distrust that is not justified
 - Makes meaningful relationships difficult suspiciousness can be displayed through argumentativeness, complaints, or quietness
 - Sensitive to criticism and need autonomy
 - Increases the risk of suicide attempts and violent behaviour
- **schizoid personality disorder**, characterised by detachment from social relationships and restricted range of expression of emotions in interpersonal settings
 - Doesn't desire or enjoy close relationships, sexual experiences with others, family, or any activities.
 - Flattened affect or coldness
 - Indifferent to praise or criticism
- **Schizotypal personality disorder**, characterised by peculiar ideas.
 - Ideas of reference, odd beliefs or magical thinking, unusual perceptual experiences, paranoid ideation, odd speech or thinking or behaving
 - Lack of close friends
 - Social anxiety that does not diminish, associated with paranoid fears

Cluster B, with dramatic, emotional, erratic features:

- **anti-social personality disorder**, characterised by behaviours which violate the rights of others without remorse;
- **borderline personality disorder**, characterised by instability of affect, self- image, relationships and behaviour;

- **histrionic personality disorder**, characterised by attention-seeking emotional displays;
 - Vain, self centred and uncomfortable when not in the limelight
 - Inappropriate seductive or provocative behaviour
 - Rapidly shifting shallow expression of emotions
 - Uses physical appearance to draw attention
 - Is suggestable and considers relationships to be more intimate than they are
- **Narcissistic personality disorder**, characterised by an exaggerated sense of self-importance.
 - preoccupied with fantasies of success and believes they are 'special' and has a sense of entitlement and request excessive admiration
 - Interpersonally exploitative and lacks empathy and displays arrogant attitude
 - Is envious of other or believes others are envious of them

Cluster C, with features of anxiety or fearfulness:

- **avoidant personality disorder**, characterised by keeping away from social situations because of fear of criticism, rejection or embarrassment;
 - avoids situations with interpersonal contact (occupational, intimate relationships, new social situations etc.)
 - Preoccupied with being rejected or criticized in social situations
 - Views self as socially inept, unappealing or inferior and is reluctant to take personal risks
- **dependent personality disorder**, characterised by a pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of by others;
 - Agree with others to avoid rejection, need reassurance, have difficulties with responsibility and decision making,
- **Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder**, characterised by a preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism and control.

Gender differences in the diagnosis of personality disorders;

Men diagnosed with a personality disorder

- Display traits that are more **aggressive, structured, self-assertive** and **detached**
- **Antisocial** personality disorder is more common

Women diagnosed with personality disorder

- Display traits that are more **submissive, emotional** and **insecure**
- Dependent, histrionic and borderline personality disorders are more common

Differences

- **Assessment gender bias**: May be a result of clinician bias
- **Criterion gender bias**: disorders (such as histrionic) themselves being biased towards stereotypical traits.