
News Releases

For more information, contact us:

Joel Fosha

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

812-855-6508

foshaj@indiana.edu

Indiana University Expert can Comment on Proposed Changes to Autism Diagnosis

Indiana University News Tip (February 22, 2010)

[Indiana University expert can comment on proposed changes to autism diagnosis](#)

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- The American Psychiatric Association this month released proposed draft diagnostic criteria for the fifth edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, also known as DSM-5.

One proposed change involves diagnosis of autism disorders. Under previous versions of the manual, autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome and pervasive developmental disorders-not otherwise specified all fell under the major heading of Pervasive Development Disorders. Under the proposed changes, the diagnostic category of Autism Spectrum Disorders would encompass the previous three categories.

"This is creating quite a buzz," says Cathy Pratt, director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism at Indiana University and chair of the board of directors of the Autism Society. "There is concern that those with the diagnosis of Asperger's will be left behind. Clearly, we will need to be diligent to ensure that those who truly meet the criteria are not excluded."

However, Pratt said, the awareness that autism refers to a spectrum of disorders is not entirely new.

"Fortunately, in many states, including Indiana, the term 'autism spectrum disorders' has been used for more than a decade to highlight the reality that each individual on the spectrum exhibits characteristics in various ways and to different degrees," she said. "While there are common characteristics, how these are manifested differs greatly from one person to the next. "

The Web site of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism at <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca> includes an article about diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders and a listing of professionals who diagnose and assess. (Click on "Diagnosis/Assessment" in the left column). This article provides information about features of a well-done diagnostic assessment and questions for families to ask. By working with trained professionals, individuals will continue to be accurately diagnosed.

The American Psychiatric Association is currently accepting comments and recommendations on the draft criteria for DSM-5. For more information, see <http://www.DSM5.org>.