



In the upcoming Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition, text revision (DSM-5-TR), criterion D in major depressive disorder was modified to reflect the original DSM-IV wording with respect to the relationship between the mood episode and the psychotic disorders as well as to provide better clarity regarding which mood episodes apply. The changes were approved by the DSM Steering Committee and APA Assembly and Board of Trustees.

Rationale for Change

The wording of criterion D in major depressive disorder in DSM-5 represented a significant change from DSM-IV, which differentiated between the relationship of mood episodes and the diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder (e.g., “the major depressive episode(s) are not better accounted for by schizoaffective disorder”). Since major mood disorders are typically characterized by multiple mood episodes, there is ambiguity in the application of these criteria when some of the mood episodes are better explained by a psychotic disorder, but other episodes are not. The corresponding criteria in DSM-IV avoided such ambiguity by explicitly indicating that the mood episodes being referred to in these exclusion criteria are those that met the definitional requirements for the disorder. Following DSM-IV, updates in DSM-5-TR included changing the respective exclusion criteria to clarify that the mood disorder can be diagnosed if the basic episode requirements for that disorder have been met (i.e., “at least one major depressive episode” for major depressive disorder). In addition, when other psychotic disorders from the exclusion criterion (i.e., schizophrenia, delusional disorder, psychotic disorder NOS) do not have mood episodes as part of their diagnostic criteria so there is no way for the mood episodes to be “explained by” by the diagnosis. For these disorders, major depressive episodes can instead be “superimposed on” the psychotic disorder, rather than being explained by it.

DSM is the manual used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) will publish DSM-5-TR in 2022.

APA is a national medical specialty society whose more than 37,400 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and research of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psychiatry.org. For more information, please contact APA Communications at 202-459-9732 or press@psych.org.

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