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Psychologists' and psychiatrists' opinions on cluster B personality symptomology in children and adolescents.

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ABSTRACT

The diagnosis of personality pathology in children and adolescents has increasingly become an area of interest in study and literature internationally. However, this topic is a much debated one among professionals whereby the validity and utility of this diagnosis has been questioned. This paper explores these arguments. The research follows that of two previous studies conducted in Johannesburg hospitals which found a prevalence of personality pathology being noted on Axis II of adolescent case files, specifically the Cluster B diagnoses.

This study investigated Psychologists and Psychiatrists opinions on what symptoms are being seen in children and adolescents that warrant the notation of personality pathology on Axis II. This study focussed on the symptomology profile of the Borderline, Narcissistic and Antisocial diagnoses, differences in symptom notation between children and adolescents, and respondents opinions on the applicability of the DSM-IV-TR to personality disorder assessment in this age demographic, as well as whether or not professionals in this study preferred to note symptoms individually or as relevant to Cluster B presentations overall. A questionnaire was constructed and Descriptive statistics were used. The research questions were tested using frequency counts, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and covariance (ANCOVA). The findings of this study demonstrate that professionals feel more able to make note of personality symptomatology in adolescents than they do in children, and that the notation of Borderline symptoms by respondents exceeded that of any other group. Furthermore, respondents more frequently endorsed the use of individual symptoms for each group, over that of using a general Cluster B notation and finally, it was found that the majority of participants believe adjustments should be made to future revisions of the DSM-IV-TR.