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International Center for Mental Health  
Mount Sinai School of Medicine,  
New York University



Section on Classification, Diagnostic  
Assessment and Nomenclature  
World Psychiatric Association

**SYMPOSIUM ON PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL  
FOUNDATIONS OF PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSIS**

**New York City, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

Sponsors:

- International Center for Mental Health, Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Section on Classification, Diagnostic Assessment and Nomenclature,  
World Psychiatric Association

Co-Sponsor:

- Classification Office, World Health Organization

Organizers:

Juan E. Mezzich, MD, PhD

WPA President Elect

Professor of Psychiatry and Director,

International Center for Mental Health,

Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NYU

Claudio E. M. Banzato, MD, PhD

Secretary of WPA Section on Classification,

Diagnostic Assessment and Nomenclature

Professor of Psychiatry,

State University of Campinas, Brazil

Venue: Hatch Auditorium, Mount Sinai School of Medicine (Fifth Avenue & 100<sup>th</sup> Street)

Despite the relative stability and increased reliability of the main psychiatric diagnostic categories during the last century, diagnosis and classification of mental disorders remain controversial. Few decades ago, a new era emerged in psychiatric diagnosis: descriptive approach, including explicit sets of diagnostic criteria and a multiaxial approach constituted its distinctive marks. The attempt was to be minimally inferential, in the pursuit of reliability, and comprehensive in a standardized way. It has certainly contributed a great deal to increase acceptance of diagnostic statements towards a more scientific psychiatry, a specialty long plagued by the lack of a common language. However, this model seems to have reached its limits. Lately, it has been suggested that the challenges of diagnosis would be better faced with a broader framework conceived in terms of health status, which encompasses clinical disorders as well as a wide range of health-related problems, and even positive aspects of health. It is time for psychiatrists and health professionals in general to move forward towards a more useful and valid international system of diagnosis and classification. To accomplish this, we must deal creatively and carefully with many complex questions about the conceptual, epistemological and methodological foundations of diagnostic models and processes.

## Symposium Program

### Saturday - May 3, 2003

9:00am - 9:30am

#### Opening:

*Juan E. Mezzich* (WPA President Elect)  
*T. Bedirhan Üstün* (WHO Classification Office Director)  
*Carlos Berganza* (WPA Classification Section Chair)  
*K.W.M. Fulford* (WPA Humanities Section Chair)  
*Claudio E.M. Banzato* (Symposium Coordinator and WPA Classification Section Secretary)

9:30am – Noon

#### I. Conceptual Bases of Diagnostic Systems

**Chair:** *Carlos Berganza* (Guatemala)

- 1. Purposes and models of diagnostic systems**  
*Juan E. Mezzich* (USA)
  - 2. Concepts of illness (disease, sickness, disorder, vulnerability)**  
*K.W.M. Fulford* (United Kingdom)
  - 3. Positive health: development, functioning, supports and quality of life**  
*T. Bedirhan Üstün* (Switzerland)
  - 4. Idiographic formulations: symbols, narratives, context and meaning**  
*James Phillips* (USA)
- Discussant:** *John Strauss* (USA)

Noon - 1:30pm Lunch Time

1:30pm - 4:00pm

#### II. Experience, Context and Diagnostic Processes

**Chair:** *K.W.M. Fulford* (United Kingdom)

- 1. Internal and external worlds: brain, mind and society**  
*Rom Harre* (USA)
  - 2. Personhood and agency**  
*John Strauss* (USA)
  - 3. Culture, experience and context in health**  
*Laurence Kirmayer* (Canada)
  - 4. Social context and stakeholders' values in building diagnostic systems**  
*John Z. Sadler* (USA)
- Discussant:** *Horacio Fabrega, Jr* (USA)

4:00pm - 4:15pm Coffee Break

### Saturday - May 3, 2003

4:15pm - 6:45pm

#### III. Measurement: Taxonomy and Scaling

**Chair & Panel Moderator:** *T. Bedirhan Üstün* (Switzerland)

- 1. Classical vs. prototypical categorization: thresholds and graded membership**  
*Assen Jablensky* (Australia)
- 2. Mutually Exclusive vs. Co-occurring Diagnostic Categories (the challenge of comorbidity)**  
*Michael First* (USA)
- 3. Dimensional and configural scaling**  
*Tom Widiger* (USA)
- 4. Panel: The concept of validity in psychiatric diagnosis and diagnostic systems**  
*Assen Jablensky* (Australia), *Michael First* (USA), *Tom Widiger* (USA)

### Sunday – May 4, 2003

9:00am - 11:30am

#### IV. Epistemological Challenges presented by Health Related Fields

**Chair & Panel Moderator:** *John Z. Sadler* (USA)

- 1. Neurosciences: genetics, molecular biology, pharmacology**  
*Jason Scott Robert* (Canada)
- 2. Psychological sciences: psychodynamics, cognitive processes and learning**  
*Christoph Mundt* (Germany)
- 3. Social sciences**  
*Horacio Fabrega, Jr* (USA)
- 4. Panel: Clinical epistemology and the integration of health classifications**  
*Christoph Mundt* (Germany), *Horacio Fabrega, Jr* (USA), *T. Bedirhan Üstün* (Switzerland)

11:30am - 11:45am Coffee Break

11:45am - 1:00pm

**Conclusions:** *Juan E. Mezzich* and *T. Bedirhan Üstün*, in collaboration with *Assen Jablensky*, *Carlos Berganza*, *John Strauss* and *John Z. Sadler*