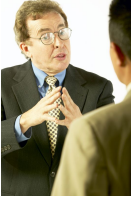


New Psychiatric Manual Combines Alcohol Disorders



The newly released update to psychiatry's diagnostic manual combines problem drinking and alcoholism into a single condition known as "alcohol use disorder," which some experts say could lead binge drinkers to be mislabeled as alcoholics.

The new diagnosis, found in the updated Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, known as DSM-5, could follow college students into adulthood.

The earlier version of the manual, DSM-4, had separate categories for alcohol abuse and the more serious alcohol dependence.

A recent study suggests the changes to alcohol disorders may not improve the diagnosis of alcoholism. The study found the changes are unlikely to result in a less accurate diagnosis, but they do not represent a clear improvement above the current diagnostic criteria.

In addition to being used by mental health professionals to diagnose patients, the DSM is used by insurance companies and schools in making decisions about coverage and special provisions for people with developmental or mental disorders, the article notes.

Critics of the DSM-5 say it will expand the list of what constitutes mental illness and will lead to a needless increase in diagnoses. A growing number of psychiatrists, psychologists and clinical social workers say depression and other normal responses to life events are too often labeled as mental illness, increasing the use of potentially dangerous medication.

Also see [NCADD Addiction Medicine Update: DSM-5](#).