

Title: To What Extent is a Formal Diagnosis of Schizophrenia Harmful or Beneficial?

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Generally, clinicians use the DSM-5 as a formal diagnosis in psychiatric disorders to determine whether such symptoms belong to a criteria for diagnosis as a mental disorder. Usually, a formal diagnosis is beneficial, by providing a guideline for clinicians to heal their patients. However, Tsuang et. al. (2000) suggested that there is a limited basis upon which the DSM's operational definition is accurate. It is important to investigate whether a formal diagnosis is truly beneficial or whether confining a person to a specific label causes harm. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the drawbacks and the benefits of a formal diagnosis of schizophrenia on patients. One of the main drawbacks is the diagnostic criteria may be too structured given that the symptoms of schizophrenia vary. More specifically, studies have shown that cultural differences form different values in society, thereby impacting the diversity of symptoms displayed by schizophrenic patients (e.g., Bauer et al., 2011; Brekke & Barrio, 1997). In contrast, Mental Health Europe (2016) provides an example of the benefit of such a diagnosis and describes how a diagnosis helps various health professionals communicate with one another to ensure a proper treatment will be provided. In conclusion, there is not a definite answer to whether or not a formal diagnosis of schizophrenia is beneficial. Factors such as cultural differences should be considered when a diagnosis is made. Ultimately, it is important to develop better diagnostic criteria that benefits the patients and society for the long term.

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