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The problem of diagnosis informed by a psychotherapeutic approach

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Understanding patients is crucial to undertake a therapeutic approach. Psychiatry currently relies mostly on diagnostic categories that rely on a phenomenological and statistical basis with putative biological foundations. ICD and DSM offer a multiplicity of diagnostic categories that tend to reify symptoms into diseases for which we don't know an etiopathology. Actually, in some cases, we are positive that these diseases do not exist in the terms described by the catalogues. These diagnostic labels are a poor guide to treatment and tend to induce stigma, to dissociate the patient from the origin of his problems and to facilitate the development of an identity around the diagnosis. Formulation, as an alternative to categorical diagnosis, approaches the complexity of the human being and aims to empower him both to understand and to manage his suffering. Formulations are theory laden and acknowledge being so. Different theoretical approaches to the understanding of a patient are discussed, focusing on psychoanalytic and systemic models.

Biography

Angel Sanchez Bahillo is trained in General Adult Psychiatry at Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca, Spain and trained in Medical Psychotherapy at West Midlands Deanery, UK. He has completed his PhD at Universidad de Murcia, Spain. He has developed the "Modelo Mar Menor" as an approach to mental health incorporating psychoanalytic and systemic thinking into the management of patients from primary care through the sanitary system. He has published numerous papers in reputed journals and has been serving as an Editor for the Royal College of Psychiatrists Psychotherapy Faculty Newsletter.

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