Development of Measures to assess the Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP): Integration of Personality Pathology with Psychiatric Symptomatology

Leonard Simms, PhD (University at Buffalo, the State University of New York)*

Objective: The Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP) is an evidence-based system for classifying psychopathology. The HiTOP consortium includes a broad range of scholars from across multiple disciplines who are working to develop, refine, and disseminate the HiTOP model. In this presentation, I summarize the work conducted thus far in the Measurement Workgroup, whose task it has been to develop measures of constructs articulated in the HiTOP model.

Method: The Measurement Workgroup is comprised of five subgroups working in a coordinated manner to develop measures of five broad domains of HiTOP symptomatology: internalizing, externalizing, detachment, somatization, and thought disorder. Rooted in the Loevinger’s (1957) principles of construct-valid scale development, each subgroup developed a comprehensive set of symptom/personality dimensions relevant to their domain, reviewed the literatures for each, developed operational definitions, and wrote an over-inclusive set of items. Next, responses to these items were collected in a range of student, crowd sourced, and patient samples. Preliminary scales were developed according to a consensually developed set of psychometric principles.

Results: In this presentation, I will summarize the processes described above and the results from each subgroups thus far. In particular, I will highlight the ways personality pathology constructs have been modeled and measured across all HiTOP domains.

Conclusion: Personality pathology is well represented in the HiTOP model and in emerging measures of that model. Classification integration between personality pathology and classic psychiatric symptomatology makes sense given what we know about their phenotypic covariation in nature. Finally, I will discuss future directions and challenges specific to the integration of personality pathology dimensions in a broader dimensional classification of psychopathology.

Learning Objectives
At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize both mentalizing and emotion regulation as important treatment targets for adolescent borderline pathology, with differing patterns of indirect and direct effects.
2. Discuss how results add to extant research related to this topic and/or how they provide suggestions for further research.
3. Recognize clinical implications of findings and possibly apply them to their own clinical conceptualizations or treatment planning.

References: