

**Network analysis and psychopathology: Concepts and methodology** (pp. 87-106)

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In recent decades, the validity of categorical diagnostic systems, like the DSM or the ICD, has been seriously questioned. Network analysis (NA), which conceives of psychological problems simply as chains of causally related symptoms and not as emerging elements of a latent disorder or illness, has been proposed as a conceptual alternative to those traditional systems. NA uses statistical tools to analyze symptom patterns and their dynamics. These analytical tools allow to identify central and peripheral symptoms within a symptom network as well as the potential causal role of each symptom within the network. The network perspective opens new avenues to address classic challenges of categorical systems such as the definition of comorbidity and vulnerability factors. NA also allows to incorporate non-symptom factors (e.g., stressful life events) within the network of psychopathological elements. In short, NA can be considered as a promising alternative to current conceptualizations of psychopathology although it still has to demonstrate its utility for both research and clinical applications.