

Abstract [6]

Topic Clinical and counseling psychology

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Abstract Psychologists' and social workers' perceptions of personality disorders in substance abusing clients. The role of psychologists in the treatment of substance abusers is a topic for debate. Given an education that encompasses developmental, personality, clinical and interpersonal psychology, it could be assumed that psychologists are better able to see the full picture of a substance abusers' personality than social workers with less training. I compared psychologists' (N=11) and social workers' (N=23) ratings of personality disorders in real clients (total N=87). Clients were in treatment for substance abuse problems. Clients were administered the DSM and ICD Personality Questionnaire (Ottoson, 1999). Psychologists were more conservative in their estimates of paranoid, schizotypal and antisocial traits than social workers after partialling out self-report. Psychologists' estimates of patients' paranoid, schizoid, borderline, avoidant and dependent personality traits were more in concordance with clients' self-report than were social workers', but their estimates of schizotypal, antisocial, and narcissistic traits were less concordant. Results are discussed in relationship to the professional self-image as psychotherapists endorsed by most psychologists in the substance abuse field. Examples of conflicts arising over individual cases are presented and discussed.

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