**Which Disorders Are “Real”?**

The following are descriptions of possible diseases that may be experienced by individuals in different cultures. Your task is to decide which of the following are “real1” disorders and which have been made up by your instructor. As you decide which are real and which are made up, think about the criteria upon which you are basing your decisions.

1 (NOTE—Descriptions of all of the actual disorders are taken directly from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual V. 2013. **[**USA: American Psychiatric Association).

1. **Amok**—“A dissociative episode characterized by a period of brooding followed by an outburst of violent, aggressive, or homicidal behavior directed at people and objects.”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

2. **Ataque de nervios**—“Uncontrollable shouting, attacks of crying, trembling, heat in the chest rising into the head, and verbal or physical aggression”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

3. **Dhat**—“Severe anxiety and hypochondriacal concerns associated with the discharge of semen, whitish discoloration of the urine, and feelings of weakness and exhaustion”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

4. **Ghost sickness**—“A preoccupation with death and the deceased…various symptoms include bad dreams, weakness, feelings of danger…, and a sense of suffocation”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

5. **Koro**—“An episode of sudden and intense anxiety that the penis (or in females, the vulva and nipples) will recede into the body and possibly cause death”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

6. **Mal de ojo (Evil eye)—**“Symptoms include fitful sleep, crying without apparent cause, diarrhea, vomiting, and fever in a child or infant”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

7. **Pibloktoq**—“An abrupt dissociative episode accompanied by extreme excitement if up to 30 minutes’ duration and frequently followed by convulsive seizures and coma lasting up to 12 hours”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

8. **Taijin kyofusho**—“An intense fear that his or her body, its parts or its functions, displease, embarrass, or are offensive to other people in odor, facial expressions, or movements”

**Check One: Real \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Made Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Which Disorders are “Real[[1]](#footnote-1)”?**

**ANSWER KEY**

All of the disorders are culturally bound syndromes that are listed in the DSM-IV. Listed below are the groups/countries/regions in which the disorders are most common.

**1. Amok**—Malaysia, Philippines, Polynesia, Papua New Guinea, Puerto Rico, and among the Navajo

**2. Ataque de nervios**—Latino(a)s from the Caribbean, Americas, or Mediterranean

**3**. **Dhat**—India, Sri Lanka, and China

**4. Ghost sickness**—selected American Indian tribes

**5. Koro**—Malaysia, South and East Asia

**6. Mal de ojo (Evil eye)—**Mediterranean cultures

**7. Pibloktoq**—arctic and subarctic Eskimo communities

**8. Taijin kyofusho**—Japan

1. (NOTE—Descriptions of all of the actual disorders are taken directly from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual V 2013. **[**USA: American Psychiatric Association). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)