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Compulsive Hoarding: a New Personality Disorder?

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'Hoarding disorder' or Messie-Syndrom is the new defined category in the edition of DSM-V from 2013. It is characterized by excessive and permanent collecting things, which are usually expired and damaged, storing them in any available living places and inability to get rid of them.

In view of my experience of being co-therapist in the self-help group for relatives of such patients and as a regular visitor to the hoarder's house as a part of treatment process the clinical picture is more complex. Most of the patients have outset in childhood; the patterns of behaviour are known for the family for years; the deterioration of the symptoms is usually connected with the experience of different kinds of losses e.g. death of the family member, job, partner, friend and etc; various kinds of compulsions, addictions, depression prevail in behaviour. The symptoms influence all areas of the patient's life. For most of them the clinical picture is ego-syntonic, which transforms treatment into a complicated, very slow and exhausting process. As there is no exact understanding what symptoms represent, the working alliance patient-psychotherapist becomes even harder.

The aim of this paper is to attract more attention to this disorder and to review the given category. By analyzing different scientific articles, psychiatric reports and psychoanalytic theory the author will try to formulate a new category of personality disorder. In conclusion the wider picture of hoarder's inner psychic life will be presented, what can influence the methods and styles of treatment.