

Practice Diagnostic Formulation – Case #2

Initial Assessment and Plan

1. The presenting complaint shares that Jorge and Michelle had a relatively good marriage but have been arguing more over the last three years as their kids went away to college. Jorge is arguing that Michelle is aloof and Michelle is arguing that Jorge is too anxious.

Jorge complained that Michelle is oblivious about their finances, doesn't care for their kids' futures, and is ignorant of her health. However, his argument may be invalid as he contradicts himself by stating "Michelle is very responsible about taking care of most of the family's bills." Michelle shared that their mortgage is almost paid off. Jorge is also worried about their children's college tuition and studies. The tuition costs aren't issues because they saved up enough money for each child, not having to take out any loans. The kids also do well enough in school, with GPAs varying from a 3.7 to 4.0. Michelle encourages her kids to make new friends and to take advantage of different opportunities which makes Jorge feel like she doesn't care about the kids but that is just his opinion and she prioritizes different values.

It's very valid for Jorge to also be worried about Michelle's health considering her family's history of diabetes but the doctor hasn't found any illness and just gave her a word of caution to watch out for her weight. Michelle is taking measures to watch what she eats but she claims to feel healthy and according to statistics she is supposedly going to outlive her husband. Just because Jorge has been jogging in the morning, it's unfair to place that expectation for Michelle if she does not want to.

This proves that Jorge is overly worried about his family and Michelle is not aloof about everything Jorge is worried about.

2. I do think there may be a disorder present. Since their marriage was good until their kids started going away to college, it seems Jorge may be dealing with Separation Anxiety Disorder. Jorge's anxiety may have increased as his children started to leave him. Jorge is also overly worried about losing his wife and becoming a lonely widower.

3. Based on the diagnostic criterion on the DSM IV, in criteria A, he is recurrently, excessively distressed and worried about the idea of his wife (such as his wife getting ill, and or passing away, who is a major attachment figure in his life. Jorge hasn't reported having any nightmares but has been dealing with sleeping issues. As followed by criteria B, Jorge has been persistently anxious for over 6 months. According to criteria C, the disturbance caused enough stress to affect Jorge's marriage and affect his sleep. As specified by criterion D, the disturbance is not better explained by other mental disorders according to what Jorge reported. There was no mention of autism, hallucination, psychotic disorders, agoraphobia, or other illnesses according to generalized anxiety disorder.

4. Another possible diagnosis may be Unspecified Cannabis-Related Disorder. Under the alcohol and substance use in the diagnostic case, it is stated that Jorge regularly smokes pot. Cannabis use disorder would be ruled out because there isn't enough information to diagnose Jorge for this disorder. Cannabis withdrawal would be ruled out because there isn't information reported whether Jorge is trying to withdraw from cannabis and even if he was, he doesn't meet the

requirement for criteria B. Cannabis Intoxication would be ruled out because Jorge doesn't show two or more of the symptoms listed in Criteria C. In order to diagnose Jorge more specifically, I would ask Jorge more questions about his cannabis use such as the duration, how often he smokes it, if he's trying to withdraw from it, and whether he shows symptoms of conjunctival injection, increased appetite, dry mouth or tachycardia. I would also ask Jorge about any other medical conditions and if he has any illness, or pain such as migraines.

5. Assuming separation anxiety disorder is present, based on the treatment plans available and listed in Anxiety Disorder file, and from the information reported, I would treat Jorge with Behavioral Therapy and use relaxation training to increase desensitization to not be as worried as he is about everything going on at home. Since Jorge's doctor reported expressing concerns about his insomnia and increased blood pressure, relaxation training will activate the parasympathetic branch of the autonomous nervous system, which releases chemicals that counter the effects of adrenaline, decreasing the heart rate and blood pressure. As of now, Jorge's anxiety doesn't appear severe enough to recommend medication, however, in order to regulate his sleeping, I would recommend taking over the counter supplements such as magnesium or melatonin so that he could sleep better.

I would advise Jorge to see me weekly to check his progress and see how he is doing. If and when Jorge feels more comfortable, I would like to ask Jorge more about his family dynamic and relationship, how he might've felt when his father passed, and what was it like for him growing up as a child to have a better understanding of where his fears and worries maybe coming from so that Jorge may possibly become more self aware and view his worries, fears, and anxieties in a different, more positive manner.