pairment associated with the behaviors indicative of the diagnosis be considered relative to what is normative for a person's age, gender, and culture when determining if they are symptomatic of a disorder.

The disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders have been linked to a common externalizing spectrum associated with the personality dimensions labeled as *disinhibition* and (inversely) *constraint* and, to a lesser extent, negative emotionality. These shared personality dimensions could account for the high level of comorbidity among these disorders and their frequent comorbidity with substance use disorders and antisocial personality disorder. However, the specific nature of the shared diathesis that constitutes the externalizing spectrum remains unknown.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Diagnostic Criteria **313.81** (F91.3)

A. A pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness lasting at least 6 months as evidenced by at least four symptoms from any of the following categories, and exhibited during interaction with at least one individual who is not a sibling.

Angry/Irritable Mood

1. Often loses temper.
2. Is often touchy or easily annoyed.
3. Is often angry and resentful.

Argumentative/Defiant Behavior

4. Often argues with authority figures or, for children and adolescents, with adults.
5. Often actively defies or refuses to comply with requests from authority figures or with rules.
6. Often deliberately annoys others.
7. Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior.

Vindictiveness

8. Has been spiteful or vindictive at least twice within the past 6 months.

Note: The persistence and frequency of these behaviors should be used to distinguish a behavior that is within normal limits from a behavior that is symptomatic. For children younger than 5 years, the behavior should occur on most days for a period of at least 6 months unless otherwise noted (Criterion A8). For individuals 5 years or older, the behavior should occur at least once per week for at least 6 months, unless otherwise noted (Criterion A8). While these frequency criteria provide guidance on a minimal level of frequency to define symptoms, other factors should also be considered, such as whether the frequency and intensity of the behaviors are outside a range that is normative for the individual's developmental level, gender, and culture.

B. The disturbance in behavior is associated with distress in the individual or others in his or her immediate social context (e.g., family, peer group, work colleagues), or it impacts negatively on social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

C. The behaviors do not occur exclusively during the course of a psychotic, substance use, depressive, or bipolar disorder. Also, the criteria are not met for disruptive mood dysregulation disorder.

Specify current severity:

Mild: Symptoms are confined to only one setting (e.g., at home, at school, at work, with peers).

Moderate: Some symptoms are present in at least two settings.
Severe: Some symptoms are present in three or more settings.

Specifiers

It is not uncommon for individuals with oppositional defiant disorder to show symptoms only at home and only with family members. However, the pervasiveness of the symptoms is an indicator of the severity of the disorder.

Diagnostic Features

The essential feature of oppositional defiant disorder is a frequent and persistent pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness (Criterion A). It is not unusual for individuals with oppositional defiant disorder to show the behavioral features of the disorder without problems of negative mood. However, individuals with the disorder who show the angry/irritable mood symptoms typically show the behavioral features as well.

The symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder may be confined to only one setting, and this is most frequently the home. Individuals who show enough symptoms to meet the diagnostic threshold, even if it is only at home, may be significantly impaired in their social functioning. However, in more severe cases, the symptoms of the disorder are present in multiple settings. Given that the pervasiveness of symptoms is an indicator of the severity of the disorder, it is critical that the individual's behavior be assessed across multiple settings and relationships. Because these behaviors are common among siblings, they must be observed during interactions with persons other than siblings. Also, because symptoms of the disorder are typically more evident in interactions with adults or peers whom the individual knows well, they may not be apparent during a clinical examination.

The symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder can occur to some degree in individuals without this disorder. There are several key considerations for determining if the behaviors are symptomatic of oppositional defiant disorder. First, the diagnostic threshold of four or more symptoms within the preceding 6 months must be met. Second, the persistence and frequency of the symptoms should exceed what is normative for an individual's age, gender, and culture. For example, it is not unusual for preschool children to show temper tantrums on a weekly basis. Temper outbursts for a preschool child would be considered a symptom of oppositional defiant disorder only if they occurred on most days for the preceding 6 months, if they occurred with at least three other symptoms of the disorder, and if the temper outbursts contributed to the significant impairment associated with the disorder (e.g., led to destruction of property during outbursts, resulted in the child being asked to leave a preschool).

The symptoms of the disorder often are part of a pattern of problematic interactions with others. Furthermore, individuals with this disorder typically do not regard themselves as angry, oppositional, or defiant. Instead, they often justify their behavior as a response to unreasonable demands or circumstances. Thus, it can be difficult to disentangle the relative contribution of the individual with the disorder to the problematic interactions he or she experiences. For example, children with oppositional defiant disorder may have experienced a history of hostile parenting, and it is often impossible to determine if the child's behavior caused the parents to act in a more hostile manner toward the child, if the parents' hostility led to the child's problematic behavior, or if there was some combination of both. Whether or not the clinician can separate the relative contributions of potential causal factors should not influence whether or not the diagnosis is made. In the event that the child may be living in particularly poor conditions where neglect or mistreatment may occur (e.g., in institutional settings), clinical attention to reducing the contribution of the environment may be helpful.

Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

In children and adolescents, oppositional defiant disorder is more prevalent in families in which child care is disrupted by a succession of different caregivers or in families in which harsh, inconsistent, or neglectful child-rearing practices are common. Two of the most common co-occurring conditions with oppositional defiant disorder are attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder (see the section "Comorbidity" for this disorder). Oppositional defiant disorder has been associated with increased risk for suicide attempts, even after comorbid disorders are controlled for.

Prevalence

The prevalence of oppositional defiant disorder ranges from 1% to 11%, with an average prevalence estimate of around 3.3%. The rate of oppositional defiant disorder may vary depending on the age and gender of the child. The disorder appears to be somewhat more prevalent in males than in females (1.4:1) prior to adolescence. This male predominance is not consistently found in samples of adolescents or adults.

Development and Course

The first symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder usually appear during the preschool years and rarely later than early adolescence. Oppositional defiant disorder often precedes the development of conduct disorder, especially for those with the childhood-onset type of conduct disorder. However, many children and adolescents with oppositional defiant disorder do not subsequently develop conduct disorder. Oppositional defiant disorder also conveys risk for the development of anxiety disorders and major depressive disorder, even in the absence of conduct disorder. The defiant, argumentative, and vindictive symptoms carry most of the risk for conduct disorder, whereas the angry-irritable mood symptoms carry most of the risk for emotional disorders.

Manifestations of the disorder across development appear consistent. Children and adolescents with oppositional defiant disorder are at increased risk for a number of problems in adjustment as adults, including antisocial behavior, impulse-control problems, substance abuse, anxiety, and depression.

Many of the behaviors associated with oppositional defiant disorder increase in frequency during the preschool period and in adolescence. Thus, it is especially critical during these development periods that the frequency and intensity of these behaviors be evaluated against normative levels before it is decided that they are symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder.

Risk and Prognostic Features

Temperamental. Temperamental factors related to problems in emotional regulation (e.g., high levels of emotional reactivity, poor frustration tolerance) have been predictive of the disorder.

Environmental. Harsh, inconsistent, or neglectful child-rearing practices are common in families of children and adolescents with oppositional defiant disorder, and these parenting practices play an important role in many causal theories of the disorder.

Genetic and physiological. A number of neurobiological markers (e.g., lower heart rate and skin conductance reactivity; reduced basal cortisol reactivity; abnormalities in the prefrontal cortex and amygdala) have been associated with oppositional defiant disorder. However, the vast majority of studies have not separated children with oppositional defiant disorder from those with conduct disorder. Thus, it is unclear whether there are markers specific to oppositional defiant disorder.

Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

The prevalence of the disorder in children and adolescents is relatively consistent across countries that differ in race and ethnicity.

Functional Consequences of Oppositional Defiant Disorder

When oppositional defiant disorder is persistent throughout development, individuals with the disorder experience frequent conflicts with parents, teachers, supervisors, peers, and romantic partners. Such problems often result in significant impairments in the individual's emotional, social, academic, and occupational adjustment.

Differential Diagnosis

Conduct disorder. Conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder are both related to conduct problems that bring the individual in conflict with adults and other authority figures (e.g., teachers, work supervisors). The behaviors of oppositional defiant disorder are typically of a less severe nature than those of conduct disorder and do not include aggression toward people or animals, destruction of property, or a pattern of theft or deceit. Furthermore, oppositional defiant disorder includes problems of emotional dysregulation (i.e., angry and irritable mood) that are not included in the definition of conduct disorder.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. ADHD is often comorbid with oppositional defiant disorder. To make the additional diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder, it is important to determine that the individual's failure to conform to requests of others is not solely in situations that demand sustained effort and attention or demand that the individual sit still.

Depressive and bipolar disorders. Depressive and bipolar disorders often involve negative affect and irritability. As a result, a diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder should not be made if the symptoms occur exclusively during the course of a mood disorder.

Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. Oppositional defiant disorder shares with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder the symptoms of chronic negative mood and temper outbursts. However, the severity, frequency, and chronicity of temper outbursts are more severe in individuals with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder than in those with oppositional defiant disorder. Thus, only a minority of children and adolescents whose symptoms meet criteria for oppositional defiant disorder would also be diagnosed with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. When the mood disturbance is severe enough to meet criteria for disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, a diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder is not given, even if all criteria for oppositional defiant disorder are met.

Intermittent explosive disorder. Intermittent explosive disorder also involves high rates of anger. However, individuals with this disorder show serious aggression toward others that is not part of the definition of oppositional defiant disorder.

Intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder). In individuals with intellectual disability, a diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder is given only if the oppositional behavior is markedly greater than is commonly observed among individuals of comparable mental age and with comparable severity of intellectual disability.

Language disorder. Oppositional defiant disorder must also be distinguished from a failure to follow directions that is the result of impaired language comprehension (e.g., hearing loss).

Social anxiety disorder (social phobia). Oppositional defiant disorder must also be distinguished from defiance due to fear of negative evaluation associated with social anxiety disorder.

Comorbidity

Rates of oppositional defiant disorder are much higher in samples of children, adolescents, and adults with ADHD, and this may be the result of shared temperamental risk factors. Also, oppositional defiant disorder often precedes conduct disorder, although this appears to be most common in children with the childhood-onset subtype. Individuals with oppositional defiant disorder are also at increased risk for anxiety disorders and major depressive disorder, and this seems largely attributable to the presence of the angry-irritable mood symptoms. Adolescents and adults with oppositional defiant disorder also show a higher rate of substance use disorders, although it is unclear if this association is independent of the comorbidity with conduct disorder.

Intermittent Explosive Disorder

Diagnostic Criteria **312.34 (F63.81)**

A. Recurrent behavioral outbursts representing a failure to control aggressive impulses as manifested by either of the following:
   1. Verbal aggression (e.g., temper tantrums, tirades, verbal arguments or fights) or physical aggression toward property, animals, or other individuals, occurring twice weekly, on average, for a period of 3 months. The physical aggression does not result in damage or destruction of property and does not result in physical injury to animals or other individuals.
   2. Three behavioral outbursts involving damage or destruction of property and/or physical assault involving physical injury against animals or other individuals occurring within a 12-month period.

B. The magnitude of aggressiveness expressed during the recurrent outbursts is grossly out of proportion to the provocation or to any precipitating psychosocial stressors.

C. The recurrent aggressive outbursts are not premeditated (i.e., they are impulsive and/or anger-based) and are not committed to achieve some tangible objective (e.g., money, power, intimidation).

D. The recurrent aggressive outbursts cause either marked distress in the individual or impairment in occupational or interpersonal functioning, or are associated with financial or legal consequences.

E. Chronological age is at least 6 years (or equivalent developmental level).

F. The recurrent aggressive outbursts are not better explained by another mental disorder (e.g., major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, a psychotic disorder, antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder) and are not attributable to another medical condition (e.g., head trauma, Alzheimer's disease) or to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication). For children ages 6–18 years, aggressive behavior that occurs as part of an adjustment disorder should not be considered for this diagnosis.

Note: This diagnosis can be made in addition to the diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, or autism spectrum disorder when recurrent impulsive aggressive outbursts are in excess of those usually seen in these disorders and warrant independent clinical attention.

Diagnostic Features

The impulsive (or anger-based) aggressive outbursts in intermittent explosive disorder have a rapid onset and, typically, little or no prodromal period. Outbursts typically last for less

than 30 minutes and commonly occur in response to a minor provocation by a close intimate or associate. Individuals with intermittent explosive disorder often have less severe episodes of verbal and/or nondamaging, nondestructive, or noninjurious physical assault (Criterion A1) in between more severe destructive/assaultive episodes (Criterion A2). Criterion A1 defines frequent (i.e., twice weekly, on average, for a period of 3 months) aggressive outbursts characterized by temper tantrums, tirades, verbal arguments or fights, or assault without damage to objects or without injury to animals or other individuals. Criterion A2 defines infrequent (i.e., three in a 1-year period) impulsive aggressive outbursts characterized by damaging or destroying an object, regardless of its tangible value, or by assaulting/striking or otherwise causing physical injury to an animal or to another individual. Regardless of the nature of the impulsive aggressive outburst, the core feature of intermittent explosive disorder is failure to control impulsive aggressive behavior in response to subjectively experienced provocation (i.e., psychosocial stressor) that would not typically result in an aggressive outburst (Criterion B). The aggressive outbursts are generally impulsive and/or anger-based, rather than premeditated or instrumental (Criterion C) and are associated with significant distress or impairment in psychosocial function (Criterion D). A diagnosis of intermittent explosive disorder should not be given to individuals younger than 6 years, or the equivalent developmental level (Criterion E), or to individuals whose aggressive outbursts are better explained by another mental disorder (Criterion F). A diagnosis of intermittent explosive disorder should not be given to individuals with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder or to individuals whose impulsive aggressive outbursts are attributable to another medical condition or to the physiological effects of a substance (Criterion F). In addition, children ages 6–18 years should not receive this diagnosis when impulsive aggressive outbursts occur in the context of an adjustment disorder (Criterion F).

Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Mood disorders (unipolar), anxiety disorders, and substance use disorders are associated with intermittent explosive disorder, although onset of these disorders is typically later than that of intermittent explosive disorder.

Prevalence

One-year prevalence data for intermittent explosive disorder in the United States is about 2.7% (narrow definition). Intermittent explosive disorder is more prevalent among younger individuals (e.g., younger than 35–40 years), compared with older individuals (older than 50 years), and in individuals with a high school education or less.

Development and Course

The onset of recurrent, problematic, impulsive aggressive behavior is most common in late childhood or adolescence and rarely begins for the first time after age 40 years. The core features of intermittent explosive disorder, typically, are persistent and continue for many years.

The course of the disorder may be episodic, with recurrent periods of impulsive aggressive outbursts. Intermittent explosive disorder appears to follow a chronic and persistent course over many years. It also appears to be quite common regardless of the presence or absence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders (e.g., conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder).

Risk and Prognostic Factors

Environmental. Individuals with a history of physical and emotional trauma during the first two decades of life are at increased risk for intermittent explosive disorder.

Genetic and physiological. First-degree relatives of individuals with intermittent explosive disorder are at increased risk for intermittent explosive disorder, and twin studies have demonstrated a substantial genetic influence for impulsive aggression.

Research provides neurobiological support for the presence of serotonergic abnormalities, globally and in the brain, specifically in areas of the limbic system (anterior cingulate) and orbitofrontal cortex in individuals with intermittent explosive disorder. Amygdala responses to anger stimuli, during functional magnetic resonance imaging scanning, are greater in individuals with intermittent explosive disorder compared with healthy individuals.

Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

The lower prevalence of intermittent explosive disorder in some regions (Asia, Middle East) or countries (Romania, Nigeria), compared with the United States, suggests that information about recurrent, problematic, impulsive aggressive behaviors either is not elicited on questioning or is less likely to be present, because of cultural factors.

Gender-Related Diagnostic Issues

In some studies the prevalence of intermittent explosive disorder is greater in males than in females (odds ratio = 1.4–2.3); other studies have found no gender difference.

Functional Consequences of Intermittent Explosive Disorder

Social (e.g., loss of friends, relatives, marital instability), occupational (e.g., demotion, loss of employment), financial (e.g., due to value of objects destroyed), and legal (e.g., civil suits as a result of aggressive behavior against person or property; criminal charges for assault) problems often develop as a result of intermittent explosive disorder.

Differential Diagnosis

A diagnosis of intermittent explosive disorder should not be made when Criteria A1 and/or A2 are only met during an episode of another mental disorder (e.g., major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, psychotic disorder), or when impulsive aggressive outbursts are attributable to another medical condition or to the physiological effects of a substance or medication. This diagnosis also should not be made, particularly in children and adolescents ages 6–18 years, when the impulsive aggressive outbursts occur in the context of an adjustment disorder. Other examples in which recurrent, problematic, impulsive aggressive outbursts may, or may not, be diagnosed as intermittent explosive disorder include the following.

Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. In contrast to intermittent explosive disorder, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder is characterized by a persistently negative mood state (i.e., irritability, anger) most of the day, nearly every day, between impulsive aggressive outbursts. A diagnosis of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder can only be given when the onset of recurrent, problematic, impulsive aggressive outbursts is before age 10 years. Finally, a diagnosis of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder should not be made for the first time after age 18 years. Otherwise, these diagnoses are mutually exclusive.

Antisocial personality disorder or borderline personality disorder. Individuals with antisocial personality disorder or borderline personality disorder often display recurrent, problematic impulsive aggressive outbursts. However, the level of impulsive aggression in individuals with antisocial personality disorder or borderline personality disorder is lower than that in individuals with intermittent explosive disorder.