

## Psychiatric kinds

**Lisa Bortolotti** (</staff/profiles/philosophy/bortolotti-lisa.aspx>) is developing a project on the classification of psychiatric disorders with Warwick Medical School's **Dr Matthew Broome** (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/staff/mbroome>).

Different disorders are classified according to very different criteria (e.g. ranges of 'abnormal' behaviour that impair function; underlying neurobiological bases for such behaviour, and distinctive drug or therapeutic treatments).

The project will uncover and analyse the philosophical assumptions that lie behind classificatory decisions in psychiatry, connecting the issues surrounding classification in psychiatry with the debates in metaphysics and the philosophy of science about the nature and status of natural kinds.

For example, one issue is whether psychiatry is rendered 'unscientific' by invoking classificatory criteria that appeal to social norms of behaviour.

The project will then consider the practical consequences for diagnosis and treatment; for example, do classificatory criteria that appeal to neurobiological factors encourage drug-based treatments at the expense of (cheaper) cognitive-behavioural treatment?