Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Defining Mental Illnesses: Can Values and Objectivity Get Along?

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 5 August 2013

**Reviewer:** Paul S Appelbaum

**Reviewer’s report:**

This is a good, brief argument about the inseparability of value judgments from the process of developing a diagnostic nosology, focused in particular on psychiatric diagnosis.

**Suggestion for Minor, but Essential, Revision:**

1) Despite the repeated (and, I think, correct) assertions about the role of values in formulating a psychiatric diagnostic manual, what is lacking in this paper is a concrete example. I would strongly urge the authors to illustrate their argument with one or more examples of how value choices are inescapable as criteria for diagnosis are being formulated. That will make this a much more potent paper.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.