

Response to Dr. Martin Kafka – Fetishism
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In "The DSM Diagnostic Criteria for Fetishism," by Martin P. Kafka (Archive of Sexual Behavior, October, 2009), the author primarily recommends expanding the diagnostic Criterion A for Fetishism to include Partialism (an exclusive focus on part of the body).

While pointing out the "paucity of published data and relative clinical rarity of fetishes as diagnostic disorders," Kafka maintains there is a need to retain Fetishism despite fact that it stigmatizes many fetishists who don't experience clinically significant distress. As Kafka states, "Fetishes could be nonclinical manifestations of a normal spectrum of eroticization or clinical disorders causing significant interpersonal difficulties."

What purpose is served by having a diagnosis of mental illness that stigmatizes millions of people? The dysfunction associated with Fetishism must manifest differently from other diagnostic categories or the other diagnoses would be more appropriate, such as Impulse Control Disorders.

This diagnosis would benefit from Blanchard's suggestion in regards to Transvestic Fetishism, that sexual behavior should be clearly delineated from a mental disorder.

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