

Child mental disorders: New diagnosis or another dilemma?

October 14, 2011

Los Angeles Times:

The final straw for Carolyn Alves came last fall when she tried to help her daughter Cecelia dress for kindergarten.

The volatile 6-year-old had worked herself into a frenzy as she tried on outfit after outfit, rejecting each as unacceptable. The tantrum at full bore, she scooped up a pile of clothes and hurled them at the front door of the family's Spanish-style bungalow in Glendale.

The clock ticked past the school's 8 a.m. bell. Alves pulled her wailing child into her arms and held her on the couch. After several minutes, Cecelia stopped, took a breath and announced that she was ready to go to school.

"It was like watching someone who was having a mental breakdown," Alves said. Then "a switch went off and she went back to being normal."

Alves and her husband, Marcos, have consulted five doctors and therapists in the last four years. Cecelia has been diagnosed with a smorgasbord of psychiatric disorders — including the controversial diagnosis of child bipolar disorder — in addition to being called a normal kid.

Experts in pediatric mental health readily acknowledge that their failure to pinpoint the problem with children like Cecelia makes a difficult situation worse. And some of them are pressing for an unconventional solution: a new diagnostic category called disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, or DMDD.

Read the whole story: [*Los Angeles Times*](#)