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B-COS Gender Matters: Presenting the Profile of Females with Bipolar Disorder from an Australian Observational Study

Abstract:

Introduction: The Bipolar Comprehensive Outcomes Study (BCOS) is a 2-year, observational study of participants with bipolar I or schizoaffective disorder. The baseline data of 139 females (total n=239) provides a representation of the average woman with bipolar disorder living in an Australian setting.

Aims: The BCOS study aims to assess the clinical, functional, and economic outcomes associated with 'real-life' treatment.

Methods: Participants are assessed at 3-monthly intervals using various measures, including the Young Mania Rating Scale (YMRS), 21-item Hamilton Depression Rating scale (HAM-D-21), and the Clinical Global Impressions-Bipolar Version scale (CGI-BP). To examine quality of life, the EuroQol instrument (EQ-5D), the 36-Item Short-Form Health Survey (SF-36), DIP (Diagnostic Interview for Psychosis) and SLICE/LIFE were used. At baseline, demographic data was also collected.

Results: Of the 139 females, 32 had a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder and 107 bipolar disorder. The average age of females at study entry was 42.2 years. Females were on average moderately depressed at baseline (HAM-D-21 mean = 14.32), and were experiencing minimal manic symptoms (YMRS mean = 7.2). Only 43.2% of women had a partner (married / defacto), however 56.1% of women in the sample had children. Unemployment rates were at 26% and of the remaining, 13% were in full time employment and 34% were in part-time work only. The majority of women earned between 200-499 dollars per week (68.3%). Less than half of participants were satisfied with their life in general (47%).

Conclusion: A significant proportion of women with Bipolar Disorder and Schizoaffective disorder have difficulty maintaining intimate relations, have reduced levels of occupational functioning, have relatively low levels of income and experience significant levels of depression.