

ANTIPSYCHOTICS BETWEEN BORDERLINE DISORDER AND MIXED STATES

Prof. Matteo Balestrieri

Under the psychopathological profile, the boundary between Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and some subtypes of bipolar disorder is not well defined. Among the latter disorders, particular attention has been paid to the Mixed States (MS), disorders characterized by the simultaneous presence of symptoms of depression and mania during the index episode. MS, which represent the third polarity of bipolar disorder, are difficult to treat and with a worse outcome than pure mania or depression. MS and BPD share many symptoms, a high risk of substance abuse, and suicidal ideation. Moreover, the presence of egosyntonic traits (i.e. the patient does not find his personality traits disagreeable, or alien to his self), a classic criterion that differentiate personality disorders from Axis I disorders, is often of little help in clinical practice.

Both BPD and MS can benefit from pharmacological treatment with antipsychotic drugs (AP). The pharmacological treatment of BPD has been analyzed in a quite extensive number of controlled studies. Well conducted clinical trials with 2nd generation AP analyzed the efficacy on separate dimensions of the personality psychopathology. As far as the treatment of MS is concerned, a number of controlled studies proved the efficacy of some but not all 2nd generation AP. Further studies are needed to confirm the efficacy of AP in personality disorders and in mood disorder subtypes.