PHYSICAL HEALTH, HEALTH CARE UTILIZATION AND LONG-TERM QUALITY OF LIFE IN REMITTED AND NON-REMITTED BPD PATIENTS: A 10-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY IN A SPANISH SAMPLE

Irene Alvarez-Tomás 1, 2, Arturo Bados 2, Joaquim Soler 3, Ana Martín-Blanco 3, Matilde Elíes 3, Cristina Carmona 3, Elisabeth Domínguez-Clavé 3, and Juan C. Pascual 3

1 CSMA Alt Penedès, Hospital Sagrat Cor Martorell, Germans Hospitalaires, 2 Department of Personality, Assessment and Psychological Treatments, Faculty of Psychology, Universitat de Barcelona (UB); 3 Department of Psychiatry, Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau.

Objectives

(1) To describe the prevalence of physical illnesses and use of medical resources in remitted and non-remitting BPD patients at 10 years;

(2) To study the impact of current physical health and BPD remission on QOL in the long-term.

Introduction

Remission from BPD has been associated with better physical health and lower use of medical services (Frankenburg & Zanarini, 2004).

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) has been related to impaired QOL (Ishak et al., 2013).

Little is known about the relative contribution of BPD diagnosis and physical health status to QOL in the long-term.

Methods

The present sample was recruited at Hospital Sant Pau for a 10-year follow-up study on the long-term clinical and functional course of BPD (Alvarez-Tomás, I. et al., 2017).

Inclusion criteria:
1) Diagnosis of BPD (DSM-IV), assessed by SCID-II and DIB-R (Total Score ≥ 6);
2) Age of 18-45 years;
3) CGI-S score ≤ 34;
4) No current diagnosis of schizophrenia, drug-induced psychosis, bipolar and major depressive disorders, alcoholism and other substance disorders, mental retardation or organic syndrome with psychiatric symptoms.

Participants:

Initial Sample n=64
- Not localized at follow-up n=6 (9.4%)
- Refuse to participate n=12 (18.7%)
- Committed Suicide n=7 (10.9%)

Follow-up Sample n=41
92.5% women 37.8 years mean age

There were not significant differences between drop-outs and continuers in age, gender, and BPD severity at baseline.

Remission was defined as not meeting BPD criteria by DIB-R and SCID-II in the prior 2-year period. 40 subjects in the follow-up sample completed the remission assessment.

Physical health and QOL was evaluated at follow-up by interview and the Multicultural Quality of Life Index – MQLI (Mezzich et al., 2000), respectively.

Results

Physical health & Use of medical resources:
- 68% of BPD patients reported to suffer from at least a medical illness and one third presented several comorbid medical illnesses in the long-term.
- Non-remitting BPD patients tended to report poorer physical health than remitted ones, although differences between groups were not significant in Fisher’s exact test analyses.
- Musculoskeletal, endocrine and lung diseases were the most commonly reported among BPD patients.
- 12% of BPD patients also reported cardiovascular risk factors in the long-term.
- The vast majority of BPD patients had been attended by a general practitioner at least once during the last year prior to follow-up assessment.
- Non-remitting BPD patients seem to use primary care services more frequently than remitted ones. This trend reached statistical significance.

Impact of current physical health and BPD remission on long-term QOL:
- Remitted BPD patients were more likely to report higher QOL (M=6.9, SD=0.37) than non-remitting ones (M=4.7, SD=0.46). This effect was significant and showed a large effect size.
- Presenting some medical illness reduced the QOL of BPD patients, although this effect was not significant in the overall sample (M=5.3, SD=0.31 vs. M=6.38, SD=0.5).
- There was a significant interaction effect between the physical condition and BPD remission on QOL.

Conclusions

The physical health of BPD patients may be hampered by chronic medical conditions and health risk factors in the long-term. Use of primary care services may be common among these patients.

Suffering from physical health problems seems to impair significantly the QOL of BPD patients who do not achieve remission over time.

In general, achieving remission from BPD appears to impact positively on long-term QOL.

Attending medical conditions in patients with persistent BPD symptoms is strongly recommended.

References


Contact: irene.alvareztomas@gmail.com