Sleep and Circadian Rhythm Disturbances in Bipolar Disorder: An Urgent Need for Objective Assessment and Systematic Follow-Up

To the Editor: We read with great interest the recent article from Leboyer and Kupfer,¹ which proposes a new framework for bipolar disorder as a chronic and progressive multisystem disorder associated with significant emotional disturbance and cognitive impairment between episodes. That article also highlights as an unmet need the lack of systematic follow-up in some of the core dimensions of bipolar disorder such as sleep and circadian rhythm.¹ Considering the cumulative body of research showing the negative impact of sleep disturbance in declarative memory² and in biological markers of allostatic load,³ the use of objective measures of circadian rhythm can help to improve the understanding of the crosslink between abnormalities in sleep and circadian rhythm, cognitive impairment, inflammation, and oxidative stress⁴,⁵ and to assess the impact of pharmacologic and psychosocial interventions in the treatment of bipolar disorder. Ultimately, as suggested by Leboyer and Kupfer,¹ a reexamination of the traditional view of bipolar disorder from an episodic illness to a chronic, multisystemic disorder can impact health care policies and services and improve preventive strategies for this devastating illness.

References


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Dr Leboyer was shown this letter and declined to comment.

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