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# Unconjugated Bilirubin in Schizophrenia/ Schizoaffective Disorder Spectrum: An Overlooked and Underestimated Biomarker Candidate

**To the Editor:** With great enthusiasm, I read an article<sup>1</sup> published in the *Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders* regarding a prospective study of unconjugated bilirubin levels of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia or bipolar affective disorder. This article<sup>1</sup> was published just 2 days after publication of an article<sup>2</sup> by my colleagues and I that described a 5-year retrospective, observational, controlled study that included not only patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, but also patients with schizoaffective disorder. Thus, I was delighted to learn that researchers from other world regions are interested in studying unconjugated bilirubin as a psychosis biomarker and that they are doing it prospectively. My group has been suggesting this kind of longitudinal methodology for studies with unconjugated bilirubin as a biomarker candidate in the schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorder spectrum,<sup>3</sup> and results of a prospective study were recently published.<sup>4</sup>

My interest in this fascinating topic began a few years ago following the presentation of a single psychotic patient to the emergency department.<sup>5</sup> My colleagues and I then began pooling clinical data and managed to publish a preliminary small report.<sup>6</sup> More recently, after hypothesizing that these disorders could be different points of a same pathological spectrum, a systematic review<sup>7</sup> was conducted that compared the mean levels of unconjugated bilirubin in patients with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and bipolar disorder. It was concluded that unconjugated bilirubin is a promising molecule that could be used as a possible biological marker for schizophrenia, and more research is needed.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, there is an impending necessity for further research in this area, and I applaud any subsequent efforts.

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