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DEFICIT IN THEORY OF MIND IS A RISK FACTOR FOR RELAPSE OF MAJOR DEPRESSION

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Background: Recently, we reported that patients with depression have theory of mind (ToM) deficit during remission from acute episodes. ToM deficit means difficulty in social adjustment and thus may indicate a poorer prognosis.

Methods: We evaluated ToM ability of 50 patients during remission from major depressive episodes. The patients were followed for 1 year and their outcome observed.

Results: After 1 year, patients who had ToM deficit in a second order false question relapsed significantly more frequently as compared with patients who did not have a deficit (Fisher's exact test $p=0.0001$; relative risk (RR)=8.105; CI 2.020, 32.524). Significant differences were shown in scores of the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale ($p < 0.0001$) between the two groups.

Conclusions: Patients with ToM deficit in second order false belief during remission may be a high risk group for recurrence and lower social function 1 year after recovering from a major depressive episode.