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PREDICTORS OF 18-MONTH OUTCOME FOR PATIENTS WITH BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

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Introduction: For quite a long time, borderline personality disorder (BPD) has been viewed as a chronic disorder and borderline patients as extremely difficult to treat. However, those views are changing and there is an increasing recognition that the BPD has a far more benign course than previously thought, but predictors of its outcome remain poorly explored.

Objective and aims: The purpose of this study was to determine the most clinically relevant predictors of the outcome of BPD at the 18-month follow-up.

Methods: Borderline patients (n=75) were compared to patients with other personality disorders (OPD) (n= 40). All subjects were assessed at baseline and 6, 12, and 18 months with a series of semi structured interviews (personality disorders, global functioning, mental disorders, life events, …) and self-report measures (alexithymia and impulsivity). Logistic regression was used to estimate hazard ratios.

Results: At the 18-month follow up, 57 BPD patients and 22 with OPD have been evaluated, 45% of borderline subjects and 50% of the OPD subjects achieved remission. Low impulsivity, low alexithymia, good global functioning, and older age at onset of symptoms were found to be significant predictors of good outcome of BPD. Our clinical data suggest that life events and the quality of current relationships are determinant in the outcome of BPD.

Conclusions: 45% of patients with BPD are likely to improve in 18-months. Specific factors, such as impulsivity, alexithymia, life events and quality of current relationships, determine the short-term outcome of this disorder.