

Second Line Treatment? Utility of Lithium's Use in Bipolar Mixed States. a Clinical Case Report.

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1. Introduction

Mixed states have had growing importance since Kraepelin. They have long contributed to the concept of bipolar disorder. They are frequent, occurring in 1/3 of all bipolar episodes. Many severe psychotic mixed states are still misdiagnosed and mistreated as schizophrenia. Because they have such complex presentations, they represent a challenge to diagnosis and treatment.

2. Objectives/ Aims

The authors' aims are to report a mixed episode; to describe its fast improvement only when lithium was introduced and to compare this result with the evidence in current guidelines.

3. Methods

A patient clinical file was analyzed. Literature research was performed. Relevant chosen papers were selected.

4. Results

Women. 33. Actress. Gradual depressive symptoms, after broke up with her boyfriend the month before. She became suspicious, showing persecutory ideas. She was thin, unable to sleep, her house was disorganized. On admission she was agitated, her eyes sad, her face almost inexpressive, her speech disconnected. She showed great instability: she seemed depressive, then laughed unexpectedly, suddenly became coprolalic. She was diagnosed borderline personality before. She has positive psychiatric family history (mother, psychotic depression). After valproate, bupropion and olanzapine her humor and judgment improved but she kept an unstable behaviour. Lithium's introduction enabled a fast, sharp recovery and organized behaviour.

5. Conclusions

Despite the prevalence of mixed states, research into the efficacy of treatments is limited. Current guidelines lack specific treatment recommendations and are sometimes inaccurate. Further studies are needed to complete our knowledge's gap in the treatment of mixed states.