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NEURAL CORRELATES OF BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER - A REVIEW

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Introduction: The Borderline Personality (BP) disorder is defined as a limit state between neurosis and psychosis. The symptomatology observed in such disorder seems to be correlated with the dysfunction of specific areas of the human brain, such as cortical and sub-cortical ones.

Objectives: This report aims to review the state of the art in order to better understand the correlation between the functional anatomy of the brain and the BP disorder, and its relevance to the symptomatic manifestation of this psychopathology.

Background: The stress response of patients with BP disorder seems to be associated with a low-responsive pituitary gland. The frontolimbic abnormalities observed in recent studies seems associated with the difficulty in the emotional management and impulsivity. The findings suggest a reduction of parietal cortex metabolism which appears to be associated to lack of insight and easy hypnotic induction. The dysfunction of the amygdala, hippocampus and prefrontal cortex was found to be lateralized on the left hemisphere, whether the structures with increased activation on the right hemisphere were the temporal lobe, ventrolateral prefrontal cortex and posterior parietal lobe. Finally, the aggressive and impulsive behavior of such patients seems to be related with low levels of cortical serotonin.

Conclusions: To our knowledge, some of the neurofunctional findings didn't match the symptomatic pattern of the BP disorder. From all the relations found, the fronto-limbic deficit is the one with a more relevant influence for the consequent emotional disturbance, a major symptom of this disorder.