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ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND BIPOLAR DISORDERS

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In the last decades a large number of co-morbidity studies were published indicating a strong relationship between affective disorders and alcohol addiction. Patients with affective disorders suffer also from dependence disorders at about 6 times more often than the rest of the population. In 30 to 60 percent of patients with alcohol addiction also affective disorders are present. In this context authors emphasized that depressive states observed in the course of alcohol addiction may be reactions to problems occurring in the frame of dependence disorders. In contrast to that depressive mood disorders in general (and above all states of anxiety and increased tension often connected with depressive states) can also be considered as starting points of addictive behaviour. Furthermore alcohol itself may induce and catalyze depressive mood. Less attention has been paid to the role of manic or hypomanic states in dependence disorders. The few studies indicate an increased co-morbidity rate between bipolar II disorders and alcohol addiction. In a psychopathological study carried out on 200 alcohol addicts in the Anton Proksch Institute Vienna we focused on the co-morbidity with bipolar II as well as on the pathogenetic role of hypomanic states in the frame of constellations of conditions of alcohol dependence using among other scales and a standardized interview, the Hypomania Self Rating Scale (HSRS, Angst). Preliminary results underline a strong relationship between Bipolar II Disorders and Alcohol Addiction: hypomanic states induce high risk behaviours which may become responsible for relapse and increased alcohol consumption.