

Electronic monitoring helps treatment adherence in Bipolar disorder

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Non-adherence in the treatment of bipolar disorder is a very common phenomenon, which has been addressed by various researchers. The negative consequences may include relapse, hospitalization, impairment in everyday functioning, and it can be costly.

In a recently published pilot study by Wenze, Armey, and Miller (2014), the improvement of treatment adherence in bipolar disorder was tested using Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). More specifically, the investigators wanted to test whether an intervention that utilized mobile technology and assisted the monitoring of bipolar disorder would be feasible and acceptable by bipolar patients.

Fourteen patients, with a diagnosis of bipolar spectrum disorder, participated in the study. The participants completed 2 weeks of brief twice-daily symptom assessments (which included common early warning signs of bipolar disorder, such as mood, mood change, sleep disturbance, psychomotor problems, anxiety, perceptual problems) and other potential momentary risk factors for treatment non-adherence (concordance between appointment attendance and medication adherence). In the beginning and at the end of this 2-week period participants completed measures of manic and depressive symptoms. Semi-individualized feedback was given back based on the participants' responses. At the end of the study, participants had also the chance to give additional feedback, and to express their overall

satisfaction with the use of the PDA.

The findings of the present study suggested that the sessions were useful for the participants as a means to learn more about their symptoms and to increase treatment adherence. According to the researchers, this particular intervention helped participants to remember their daily appointments and medications, facilitated the conversations about therapeutic relationship with their treatment providers, established a routine into their everyday life, and developed a sense of positivity about their health. Finally, the researchers also found a decrease in the depressive symptoms of the participants.

Do you use a PDA (or smartphone) or any other electronic mood diary to help you monitor your bipolar disorder?

Do you prefer it over a more traditional paper-based mood diary or not?

What has your experience been?

study reference: Wenze, S. J., Arney, M. F., & Miller, I. W. (2014). Feasibility and Acceptability of a Mobile Intervention to Improve Treatment Adherence in Bipolar Disorder: A Pilot Study. Behavior modification. – Article written by: Mrs Myrto Filioglou, BipolarLab Psychologist, Edited by: Dr Yanni Malliaris

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