Axis II comorbidities are less common in people with borderline personality disorder who are in remission


Q Does remission of severe borderline personality disorder affect the prevalence of axis II comorbidities?

MAIN RESULTS

At 6 years, 202 people had experienced remission from severe BPD. The prevalence of dependent, avoidant, self-defeating, narcissistic, and histrionic personality disorders was significantly higher among people whose BPD had never remitted, compared with those who had experienced remission (see table, no significant difference in other axis II disorders). The overall prevalence of axis II comorbidities declined over time. However, avoidant personality disorder increased in the never-remitted group. People without avoidant, dependent, or self-defeating personality disorders had a significantly earlier remission from BPD than people with these comorbidities (self-defeating: HR for remission 4.1, 95% CI 1.8 to 9.3; avoidant: HR 2.0, 95% CI 1.3 to 2.9; dependent: HR 3.5, 95% CI 2.2 to 5.7).

CONCLUSIONS

In people with severe BPD the prevalence of axis II comorbidities decreases with time, particularly in people in remission. The presence of self-defeating, avoidant and dependent personality disorders increases time to remission in people with BPD, suggesting that these axis II disorders may hinder recovery.

NOTES

Axis II disorders were assessed using DSM-III-R criteria, which is likely to differ from DSM-IV classification of axis II disorders. As participants were recruited as very disturbed inpatients, the findings of this study may not apply to less severely disturbed people with BPD. The study did not clearly establish the temporal relationship between comorbidity and remission, therefore a causality cannot be imputed.

Table Axis II disorders that differed significantly between remitted and non-remitted borderline personality disorder (BPD) at baseline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axis II disorder</th>
<th>Never-remitted BPD Baseline n = 88</th>
<th>6 years n = 64</th>
<th>Remitted BPD Baseline n = 202</th>
<th>6 years n = 200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissistic</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histrionic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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