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Epidemiology and Burden of Bipolar Disorders in Africa: a Systematic Review of Available Data From Africa.

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Introduction:

Bipolar disorder impacts negatively on the patient, the family as well as the society. It taxes the health care services due to a combination of the illness and associated medical as well as psychiatric comorbidities. Unfortunately, in Africa knowledge of the epidemiology and burden of bipolar disorders is based mainly on data from the United States and Europe.

Objectives:

To highlight the epidemiological, clinical, and economic burden of bipolar disorder in Africa.

Methods:

A systematic review of publications from Africa relating to the burden of bipolar disorder was conducted, including studies on epidemiology, patient-related issues and costs.

Result:

Data from community surveys conducted in Nigeria and Ethiopia indicated a lifetime prevalence of 0.1% to 0.6% for bipolar disorder. A study from Egypt showed a misdiagnosis rate of up to 36.2%. In one study, 8.1% of the males and 5.4% of the females reported a previous suicide attempt, while another study showed that up to 60% of patients with bipolar disorder had at least one comorbidity. There were no reports on mortality and cost of illness.

Conclusion: Despite the heterogeneous methodologies, samples and dearth of adequate representative evidence from Africa, we have identified bipolar disorder as a major mental health issue. There still exists a dearth of evidence regarding the epidemiological, clinical, social, and economic burden of the disorder in Africa.