

The Sleep Changes in Bipolar Disorder

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Introduction: The bipolar disorder, characterized by mania episodes, hypomania and depression is a serious recurring perturbation associated not only to severe sleep pattern disturbances but also to a significant circadian disruption. These fluctuations/changes have a great impact on quality of life and in the disease prognosis.

Objectives: Review the main sleep pattern alterations/fluctuations observed in the bipolar disorder, their clinical impact and the involved pathophysiological mechanisms.

Results: Complaints about sleep pattern changes may occur during any phase of the disease. These include frequent night-time awakenings, poor sleep quality, reduction of the total sleeping time (TST) and decreased latency and increased density of REM sleep. In the depressive phase, patients also reveal insomnia/hypersomnia, difficulty waking up and excessive daytime sleepiness.

Discussion/Conclusion: Sleep pattern fluctuations are frequent in bipolar disorders and have a great clinic implication as a symptom. The corrections of sleep disturbances observed in bipolar disorder should be considered a therapeutic priority, since they prevent symptoms recurrence and smooth the socio-professional integration, thus providing greater success in patient's rehabilitation and quality of life.