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PREDICTORS OF RECURRENCE OF BIPOLAR DISORDER DURING PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM PERIOD IN A SAMPLE OF EGYPTIAN WOMEN

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Introduction: Pregnancy and the postpartum are times of increased risk for women with bipolar disorder to develop new episodes.

Objective: To evaluate factors that are supposed to be associated with recurrence of bipolar I disorder among euthymic women with a history of bipolar I disorder, which could be used as a predictors of bipolar I disorder in that period.

Method: Eighty-three pregnant women with history of bipolar I disorder were followed through pregnancy and post-partum periods for possible recurrence of a new episode. All women were assessed using the MINI International Neuropsychiatric Interview. Factors that may contribute to recurrence were assessed prospectively; these included age of patients, age of onset of bipolar disorder, duration of illness, number of previous attacks, number of previous pregnancies, prior episodes in pregnancy or postpartum, complications during pregnancy and labor, pregnancy type, prior hospitalization, prior suicidal attempts, time since last episode in months, and continuation of medications.

Results: Sixty five % of euthymic bipolar females had recurrence of a new episode, either during pregnancy (33.73 %) or 4 weeks postpartum (31.32 %). Discontinuation of medications, longer duration of illness, more number of previous attacks, more number of previous pregnancies, more prior episodes in pregnancy, more complication during pregnancy, more complication during labor, unplanned pregnancy type, prior hospitalization, were associated with recurrence of bipolar disorder during pregnancy and postpartum.

Conclusions: Multiple factors were associated with risk of recurrence of bipolar I disorder during pregnancy and postpartum, which should be while planning treatment for such women.