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SOCIAL COGNITION IN BIPOLAR ILLNESS

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Theory of Mind (ToM) is defined as the cognitive ability to infer mental states to oneself and to others, in terms of thought, emotion and intention. There are many studies about ToM in schizophrenia, but a paucity of them about ToM in bipolar disorder, despite the suggesting relationship between ToM and emotions. Some affective patients were included as control group in schizophrenia studies, but these samples were small and heterogeneous. Some authors have found ToM deficit in manic and depressed patients, but there is also some evidence of a ToM deficit even in a state of euthymia, associated to other cognitive deficits, mainly in executive function. Multiple factors could be involved in this ToM deficit, but these studies open the way for a line of research about the cognitive mechanisms underlying the psychosocial disadjustment that these patients present. Mentalization skills could be more decisive for keeping a job or a social network than other neurocognitive variables, and BD remains a very important cause of psychosocial disadvantage. In this workshop we will debate the relevance of these findings in BD and the potential therapeutic consequences.