

Cognitive Emotional Regulation in Remitted Bipolar and Unipolar Patients: a Romanian Sample.

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Introduction: Cognitive emotion regulation refers to the way the individual responds to emotionally arousing information.

Objectives: Identifying differences in cognitive emotion regulation of remitted bipolar (after a depressive episode), remitted unipolar patients and a healthy control group.

Methods: This study was conducted in Timisoara, Romania, between 2009 and 2013 and consists of outpatients from the Timisoara Psychiatric Clinic and the Timisoara Mental Health Center, diagnosed with either bipolar disorder (n=27) or recurrent depressive disorder (n=32), according to ICD-10 criteria and a healthy control group (n=70). For assessing cognitive emotional regulation we used the Cognitive Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ), which comprises of five positive and four negative emotional response strategies (subscales).

Results: Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.001$) between the patient groups and the control group were found in the following subscales: 'self-blame', 'rumination', 'catastrophizing', 'blaming others' (negative emotional response strategies – higher mean scores than the control group), 'positive refocusing' and 'putting into perspective' (positive emotional response strategies – lower mean scores than the control group). When comparing the two patient groups, we found statistically significant differences in the following subscales: 'self-blame' (higher mean scores for unipolar subjects), 'blaming others' (higher mean scores for bipolar subjects), 'positive refocusing' (higher mean scores for unipolar subjects) and 'putting into perspective' (higher mean scores for bipolar subjects).

Conclusions: Cognitive emotional regulation strategies used by unipolar and bipolar patients seem to differ significantly and may be an insight to the medium and long-term outcome, thus potentially guiding therapeutic strategies.