

to unpleasant stimuli than the control participants. In fact, the BPD participants had significantly lower skin conductance responses and showed an absence of the fear-potentiated startle response, suggesting a general state of underarousal. On the emotion regulation task, both groups showed similar startle responses when instructed to maintain or suppress their emotions. These results do not support current theories of emotion dysregulation in BPD, suggesting instead that those with BPD are hyporesponsive to affective stimuli.

02-02

Pituitary volume in adolescents with first-presentation borderline personality disorder

B Garner¹, AM Chanen¹, L Phillips², D Velakoulis³, SJ Wood^{3,4}, HJ Jackson^{1,2}, C Pantelis³, PD McGorry¹

¹ORYGEN Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne; ²School of Behavioural Sciences, The University of Melbourne; ³Melbourne Neuropsychiatry Centre, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne, and Melbourne Health; and ⁴Brain Research Institute, Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre, Melbourne, Australia

Background: Borderline personality disorder (BPD) might be associated with hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis dysregulation. Previous studies in adult BPD samples have been equivocal possibly because of confounding factors, such as chronicity of BPD and associated comorbidity. Studying first-presentation adolescent BPD samples minimizes these confounds.

Methods: Twenty BPD (15 women, mean age 17.3 years) and 20 healthy control participants (15 women, mean age 19.0 years) underwent magnetic resonance imaging scanning. Pituitary gland volumes (PGVs) were estimated and compared between the groups and also within the BPD group, based upon exposure to childhood trauma.

Results: PGV did not differ between patients with BPD and controls ($P = 0.6$; effect size = 0.19). Patients with BPD exposed to childhood trauma ($n = 9$) had smaller (−18%) pituitaries compared with patients with BPD with no exposure to childhood trauma ($n = 10$; $P = 0.1$; Effect size = 0.74).

Conclusions: These findings suggest that exposure to trauma, rather than BPD *per se*, might be associated with altered PGV, possibly reflecting HPA dysfunction.

02-03

An MRI study of pituitary volume and suicidal behaviour in adolescents with first-presentation borderline personality disorder

M Jovev¹, B Garner¹, L Phillips², D Velakoulis³, SJ Wood^{3,4}, HJ Jackson^{1,2}, C Pantelis³, PD McGorry¹, AM Chanen¹

¹ORYGEN Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne; ²School of Behavioural Science, The University of Melbourne; ³Melbourne Neuropsychiatry Centre, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne & Melbourne Health; and ⁴Brain Research Institute, Melbourne, Australia

There has been a lack of research examining the association between hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis function and suicidal behaviour in patients diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD), despite the established relationship between BPD and suicide. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between pituitary gland volume (PGV) and number of suicidal behaviours in adolescent patients with first-presentation BPD. The main findings indicate that age, internalizing problems and number of suicidal behaviours are significant predictors of PGV in first-presentation BPD. The larger PGV in those with a higher number of suicidal behaviours might reflect greater activation of the HPA axis by the actual act of self-harm or increased activation of the stress response by factors that also lead to suicidal behaviour, such as life events. The study points to the need to explore other suicide parameters (eg intent, medical threat) together with direct neuroendocrine measures in larger samples of patients with BPD.

02-04

Interpersonal functioning in borderline personality disorder: the role of attachment, self-schema and social cognition

T Jennings¹, C Hulbert², H Jackson², Andrew Chanen³

¹Austin Repatriation Hospital; ²School of Behavioural Science, The University of Melbourne; ORYGEN Research Centre, Parkville, Victoria, Australia

Background: The study investigated the clinical picture of young people with borderline personality disorder (BPD) traits by comparing them with a group of young people with major depressive disorder (MDD) on a set of variables that target core features of BPD