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BIPOLAR DISORDER TREATMENT IN AN ACUTE INPATIENT UNIT

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Bipolar disorder is a chronic, debilitating psychiatric disease. The management of this disorder involves treating current episodes and preventing their long-term recurrence.

Many patients with Bipolar Disorder are hospitalized at some point in the course of their illness. Although most bipolar patients do not require extended inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations, short-term hospitalizations may be necessary during acute or potential crises.

Hospitalization is among the most expensive treatment options available, and it is therefore offered sparingly and generally only when no other treatment options will prove sufficient to ensure patient safety.

A hospital setting should be considered when safety is in question due to suicidal, homicidal, or aggressive impulses or actions, as well as inability to care for self. Other clear indications for hospital admission are the need for diagnostic procedures, history of rapidly progressive symptoms (especially psychotic phenomena), the rupture of patient's usual support systems and a patient's grossly reduced ability to take care of themselves.

The aim of this study is to characterize the inpatient treatment of bipolar patients admitted in the Hospital São João's Psychiatry Department. Data were collected from clinical files using an investigation protocol especially developed for this purpose. This protocol includes sociodemographic information, the referral source, the admission path, reason for hospitalization, current phase of disease, voluntary versus involuntary status, number of previous admissions, prescribed medications and length of stay.