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PREDICTORS OF MANIA IN A SAMPLE OF PATIENTS TREATED WITH ANTIDEPRESSANTS (PRELIMINARY RESULTS)

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Aims: From 35% to 60% of cases the initial presentation of illness in bipolar disorder is different from mania or hypomania. So far the studies that have investigated predictors of (hypo)mania have been concentrated on samples suffering from depression. On one hand it is well known that antidepressant drugs are commonly prescribed in a broad spectrum of disorders other than depression. On the other hand there are strong connections within bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders that have been reported to be a possible clinical onset of a subsequent bipolar disorder. In all these cases patients are likely to be treated with antidepressant drugs, the effects of which have been associated with a worsened course of bipolar illness, from switching to mania to a rapid cycling course. This is the reason that led to perform a research on predictors of bipolar evolution on an antidepressant treated sample of outpatients irrespective of the diagnosis. This study examines clinical features at the first presentation of the illness that can be considered predictive of the subsequent bipolar course of illness.

Method: A sample of outpatients treated for the first time in their life with antidepressant drugs has been prospectively evaluated in order to assess the clinical features associated with the later onset of bipolar disorder.