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What Can Daily Life Assessment Tell Us About the Bipolar Spectrum?

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Abstract

Evidence suggests that bipolar psychopathology is better characterized as a spectrum than by categorical diagnoses. The examination of symptoms and impairment associated with bipolar spectrum psychopathology is important and can be enhanced by methods that examine affect, thoughts, and behavior daily life. The present study extended findings that provide validation of a continuum of bipolar psychopathology in daily life. 294 young adults completed the Hypomanic Personality Scale (HPS) and experience sampling using smartphones. Participants were signaled eight times daily for one week to complete surveys in their normal daily environment. Bipolar spectrum psychopathology was characterized by increased positive and negative affect, confidence, racing thoughts, energy, and impulsivity in daily life. The HPS moderated the association of stress with trouble concentrating, irritability with dysphoria and impulsivity, and confidence with feeling like one's emotions were out of control. This study demonstrated that bipolar spectrum psychopathology is associated with disruptions in affect, thoughts, and behaviors and provided further evidence for a continuum of bipolar

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