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Association of Suicidal Risk with Ratings of Affective Temperaments

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Abstract

Background: Ratings of particular temperament-types with the TEMPS-A autoquestionnaire have been associated with suicidal risk, and combinations of such ratings may enhance the association. However, the predictive value of scores for individual temperaments and combinations remains to be quantified.

Method: We evaluated associations of TEMPS-A ratings for anxious (*anx*), cyclothymic (*cyc*), dysthymic (*dys*), hyperthymic (*hyp*) and irritable (*irr*) temperaments, with a history of suicidal acts or reported suicidal ideation in 882 patients with bipolar (BD; n=509), major depressive (MDD; n=268) or anxiety (ANX; n=105) disorders.

Results: With BD, scores for *cyc* and *irr* were highest and *anx* lowest; with MDD, *dys* scored highest, *hyp* lowest; *anx* was highest with ANX and MDD. Women (n=497) had higher *anx* and *cyc* scores than men; scores for *irr* and *hyp* decreased with age. Scores for *dys*, *anx*, and *cyc*, were higher, and *hyp* lower, with greater HDRS₂₁ depression ratings. Among 347 suicidal subjects (112 with attempts), *cyc*, *dys*, and *irr* scores were higher, *hyp* lower. Pooled score [*cyc+dys+irr - hyp*] best distinguished subjects with suicide attempts versus nonsuicidal subjects, including in Receiver-Operating Characteristic (ROC) analysis (AUC for acts = 70.1% [64.9–75.3]). Multivariable modeling associated suicidal acts with TEMPS-A [*cyc+dys+irr - hyp*] composite-score, depression severity, BD or MDD diagnosis, and older at illness-onset.

Conclusions: Subjects with suicidal acts or ideation were best distinguished by composite TEMPS-A score [*cyc+dys+irr - hyp*]. These factors should help to identify those at suicidal risk.

Key Words: anxiety, bipolar disorder, major depression, prediction, suicide, temperament, TEMPS-A

1. Introduction

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