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Serum agouti-related protein (AgRP) levels in bipolar disorder: could AgRP be a state marker for mania?

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Abstract

Orexigenic and anorexigenic peptides, especially agouti-related protein (AgRP) and leptin, play important roles in the regulation of energy homeostasis in bipolar disorder. AgRP regulates energy metabolism by increasing appetite and decreasing energy expenditure. The resting energy expenditures of patients with manic bipolar disorder are higher than those of controls. Due to the effects of AgRP on energy expenditure and the increased physical activity of manic patients, we hypothesised that serum AgRP levels may be lower in manic patients than in euthymic patients and controls. There was a total of 112 participants, including 47 patients in the manic group, 35 patients in the euthymic group and 30 healthy controls. For this study, serum AgRP, leptin, cholesterol, and cortisol levels were measured and compared between the groups. The serum AgRP, leptin, and cholesterol levels were significantly different between the groups. The serum AgRP levels of manic group were significantly lower than those of euthymic and control groups. The lower serum AgRP levels of manic patients could be indicators of impaired energy homeostasis during manic episodes. Since the serum AgRP levels of manic patients are lower than those of euthymic patients and controls, AgRP could be a state marker for manic episodes.

Keywords: Bipolar disorder; agouti-related protein; leptin; energy metabolism; state marker; mania.

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