Borderline personality and attention-deficit hyperactivity traits in childhood are associated with hypomaniac features in early adulthood.

Mistry S, Zammit S, Price VE, Jones HJ, Smith DJ.

doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2017.06.039. [Epub ahead of print]

Abstract

BACKGROUND: There is limited understanding of the symptomatic development of bipolar disorder from childhood to early adulthood.

AIMS: We assessed whether borderline personality disorder traits, ADHD, and emotional, behavioral and social difficulties during childhood were associated with hypomania assessed in young adulthood.

METHOD: We used data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), to examine associations between measures of childhood psychopathology and lifetime hypomaniac features assessed at age 22-23 years using the Hypomania Checklist-32 (HCL-32; n = 3372). We also conducted a factor analysis of the HCL to identify latent constructs underlying hypomania, and the extent to which childhood psychopathology was associated with these.

RESULTS: We identified two factors of the HCL corresponding to energy/mood and risk-taking/irritability. There was evidence of an association between childhood borderline personality disorder traits and both hypomania factors, with evidence that the association was stronger with the risk-taking/irritability factor. All individual borderline traits, with the exception of fear of abandonment, were associated with hypomania. There was also evidence of an association between most other measures of childhood psychopathology (ADHD, hyperactivity, conduct problems, peer relationship problems, and reduced prosocial behavior) and the risk-taking/irritability factor, but much less consistent evidence of association with the energy/mood factor.

LIMITATIONS: The HCL cannot diagnose bipolar disorder and may be subject to reporting bias.

CONCLUSIONS: A broad range of childhood psychopathologies may represent early markers of risk for hypomania. Further studies are required to understand the mechanisms underlying these associations, and to inform earlier detection of bipolar disorder.