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NEUROBIOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL PREDICTORS OF IMPULSIVITY IN BULIMIA NERVOSA

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Objective: The main aim of this study was to analyze the association between a set of neurobiological/clinical factors and impulsivity in patients suffering from bulimia nervosa, as well as the capability of this factors to predict the severity of impulsivity.

Methods: The Impulsive Behaviors Scale (IBS), the Diagnostic Interview for Borderline Patients - Revised (DIB-R), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), the Millon Multiaxial Clinical Inventory (MMCI-II) and the Family Environment Scale (FES) were applied to 70 female patients with DSM-IV BN (purging subtype). Twenty-four hour urinary excretion of norepinephrine (NE), 3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenylglycol (MHPG), serotonin (5-HT), 5-hydroxy-indol-acetic acid (5-HIAA), dopamine (DA), homovallinic acid (HVA), and morning serum cortisol levels before and after the administration of 1 mg of dexamethasone were determined.

Results: Impulsivity was associated to lower levels of urinary 5-HT and 5-HIAA, borderline features, and lower family expressed emotion.

Conclusions: The consideration of impulsivity as a core clinical feature in patients with bulimia nervosa could lead us to identify clinical subtypes of patients, with specific clinical profiles and specific treatment needs.