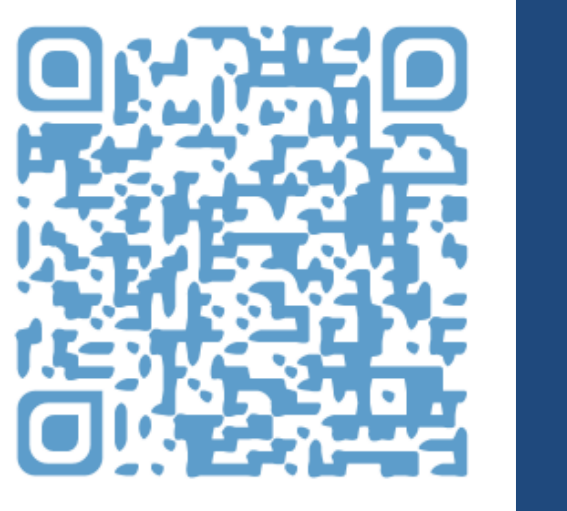


BIPOLAR MISDIAGNOSIS IN A 10-YEAR STUDY: How age may influence the way bipolarity is perceived in primary care



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INTRODUCTION

In our recent 10-year research report of 10,492 psychiatric evaluations, agreement between suspicion of bipolar disorder (BD) in primary care and the diagnosis of BD by secondary care psychiatrists was low, yielding a kappa coefficient of 0.35 (95% CI [0.31,0.38]), which did not improve over time.[†]

AIM: The goal of the present study was to understand what disorders BD is most often mistaken for in primary care, and whether age has an impact on the nature of the suspected diagnoses.

METHODS

The study was conducted at Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur de Montréal's shared-care evaluation program, which establishes/clarifies psychiatric diagnoses requested mainly from general practitioners.

The group of patients diagnosed with BD but referred for a different disorder was identified (false negatives). Prevalence of the various disorders suspected in primary care was assessed, according to age group, and compared using Chi-square tests (significance was set at $p > 0.05$).

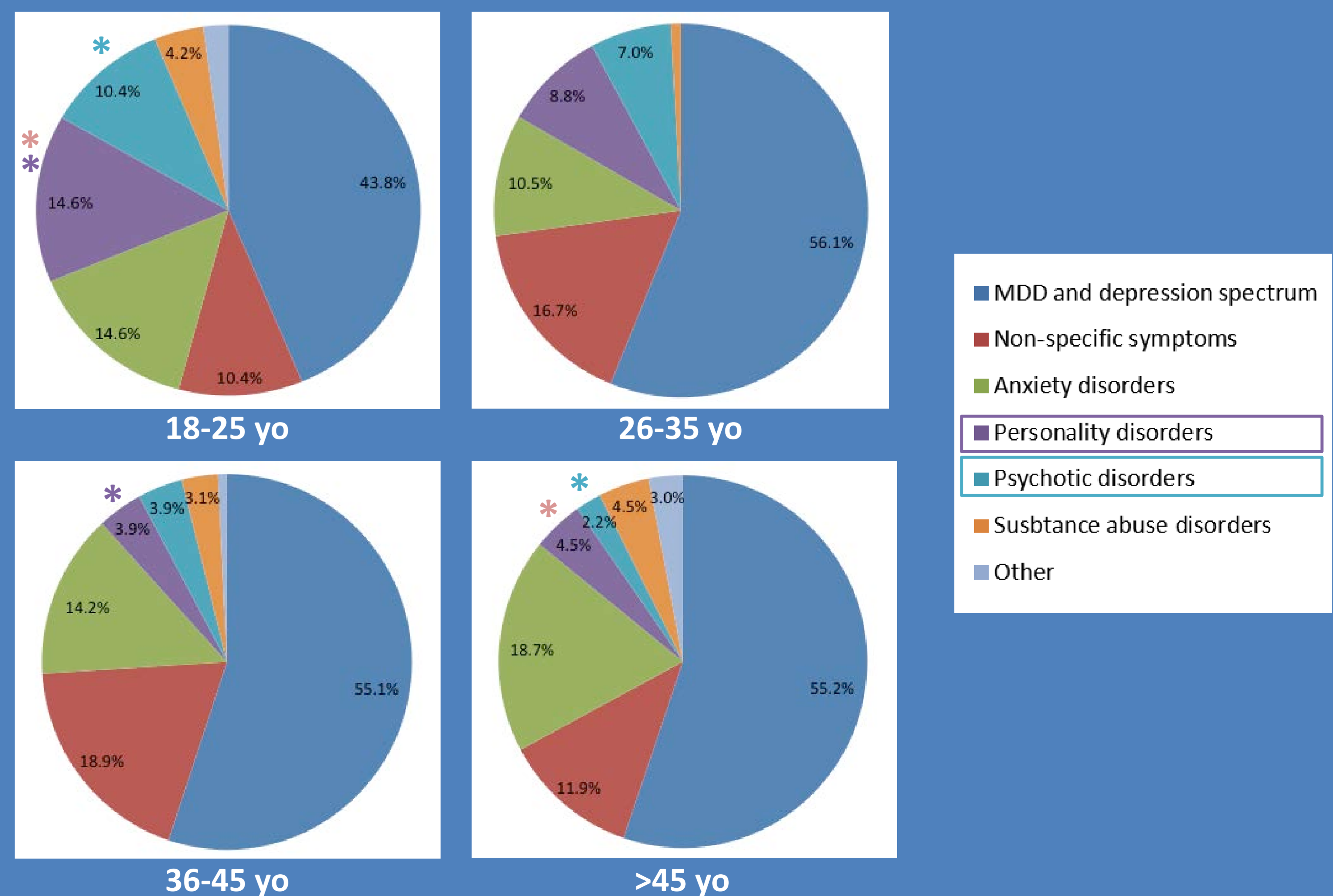
CONCLUSION

Our results suggest that BD is most often mistaken for MDD and depression spectrum or anxiety disorders in primary care. However, the nature of BD misdiagnosis seems to evolve with age, as BD is more frequently mistaken for personality and psychotic disorders among younger patients.

RESULTS

A total of 423 patients (40.2±11.3 yo; 41.5% men) were diagnosed with BD but had been referred for a different disorder. The most common referrals were major depressive disorders (MDD) and depression spectrum (48.6%), non-specific symptoms (e.g. sadness, sleep disturbances, fatigue, aggressiveness) (13.6%), and anxiety disorders (13.2%).

Referrals for suspicion of personality disorders were more frequent among 18-25 yo than among 36-45 yo ($X^2(1)=6.18, p<0.05$) and >45 yo ($X^2(1)=5.44, p<0.05$). Referrals for suspicion of psychotic disorders were also more frequent among 18-25 yo than among >45 yo ($X^2(1)=5.62, p<0.05$).



[†] Daigneault A, Duclos C, Saury S, et al. [J Affect Disord.](#) 2015 Mar 15;174:225-32.