

Impact of Relative Exposure to COVID-19 on Trauma, Mood and Anxiety Among Youth with Bipolar Spectrum Disorders

Christina Klein, Ph.D., M.P.H.¹, Jeffrey Welge, Ph.D.¹, Thomas Blom, M.S.¹, Stephen Crystal, Ph.D.², Victor Fornari, M.D.³, Claudine Higdon, M.D.³, Saranda Gashi, M.P.H.³, Christoph Correll, M.D.⁴, Melissa DelBello, M.D., M.S.¹

¹ Department of Psychiatry, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
² Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research, Rutgers University
³ Zucker Hillside Hospital/Northwell Health and Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell
⁴ Department of Psychiatry; Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy, Berlin, Germany

- The COVID-19 pandemic may be associated with poor outcomes for youth with Bipolar Spectrum Disorders.
- MOBILITY (Metformin for overweight and OBese children with bipolar spectrum disorders Treated with second-generation antipsychotics)-TEACH (Telemedicine Enhanced Access during COVID-19 to Healthcare) characterized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth with Bipolar Spectrum Disorders (BSD) and their families.
- We observed troubling rates of emergent PTSD, new or increased suicidal ideation and attempts, and increased rates of depression and anxiety.



This study is funded by Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) (PCS-1406-19276)

METHODS

- Youth and their caregivers enrolled in MOBILITY were invited to complete an online survey and a telephone interview from 12/15/20-10/31/21 regarding the impact of COVID-19 on their mental health care, depression, anxiety, trauma, suicidality and substance use.
- Participants provided electronic informed consent or assent if <18 years before completing the survey/ interview.

HYPOTHESIS

- Greater exposure to COVID-19 would increase rates of depression, anxiety, trauma, suicidality and substance use in a large cohort of youth with bipolar disorder.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age:** 8-23 (N=397, M=15.9, SD=3.3)
- School Status:** High school (40%), Middle (27%), Elementary (11%), Not Currently Enrolled (11%)
- Gender:** Boys (53%), Girls (42%) other (5%)

RESULTS

- Suicidality**
 - ❖ 16% had more thoughts of being better off dead since COVID-19.
 - ❖ 13% endorsed increased suicidal ideation.
 - ❖ 13% reported an increase in suicide attempts.
- Mood Symptoms**
 - ❖ 39% of youth reported anxiety worsened during the pandemic.
 - ❖ 29% reported depression worsened.
- Substance Abuse**
 - ❖ There was no increase in substance use during COVID-19 in this sample.

Table 1. Association Between Testing Positive for COVID-19 and Emergent PTSD

	Emergent PTSD	No PTSD	p-value	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval
Patient tested positive for COVID-19 n (%)	10 (40%)	33 (20%)	0.037	2.71	1.12, 6.57
Someone close tested positive for COVID-19 n (%)	27 (69%)	132 (53%)	0.059	2.01	0.978, 4.14

Table 2. Association Between Some Close Dying from COVID-19 and Suicidality

	Someone Close Died from COVID-19 (n=24)	No one Close Died from COVID-19 (n=276)	p-value	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval
Suicidal Ideation n(%)	7 (25%)	27 (12%)	0.069	2.52	0.98, 6.48
Suicide Attempt n(%)	7 (25%)	28 (12%)	0.07	2.44	0.95, 6.26

CONCLUSIONS

- Youth with BSD seem to experience increased anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Testing positive for COVID-19 was associated with the highest risk of developing PTSD for youth with Bipolar Spectrum Disorders.
- Screening for PTSD and suicidality in patients with BSD who have high exposure to COVID-19 is necessary.

