

SELF FUNDED PHD OPPORTUNITY

Emotional intelligence in bipolar disorder

Emotional intelligence (EI) is related to better mental health in non-clinical samples (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016). However, research concerning the practical and diagnostic utility of EI in clinical groups is limited. Some research suggests those with major depression have lower levels of EI (particularly emotion management) compared to controls (Downey et al., 2008; Hansenne & Bianchi, 2009), although it is unclear if this trend holds for patients in remission. Similar patterns of deficit have been documented in clinical groups with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and (sub-clinical) borderline personality disorder (e.g., Eack et al., 2010; Gardner & Qualter, 2009; Kee et al., 2009). There is also some evidence to suggest interventions can improve EI and reduce depressive symptoms in those with depression and borderline personality disorder (Jahangard et al., 2012). To date, however, there is a dearth of studies examining EI in individuals who have bipolar disorder. This is necessary to examine given the potential importance of socio-cognitive skills (e.g., theory of mind) for functional outcomes (Fantie et al., 2018; Ospina et al., 2018), and potential application to therapeutic intervention. Working with the Bipolar Disorder Research Network (BDRN.org) and having access to a very large UK-wide research sample of individuals with bipolar disorder the current studentship seeks to examine the socio-cognitive (EI) profile of individuals with bipolar disorder, and examine how this relates to functional outcomes. Potential moderators of this profile (e.g., clinical features; medication; neurocognitive profile) may also be explored.

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