

P-357

Impulse control disorder and addictive behaviors in compulsive buying disorder patients within and without the bipolar spectrum

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Background: compulsive buying disorder (CBD) is characterized by unrestrained chronic buying behavior leading to accruing debts, personal and interpersonal damage. CBD is usually regarded as a behavioral addiction within the broader realm of impulse control disorders (ICD). However, unrestrained buying is also a hallmark of manic episodes from the bipolar disorder (BD) with a suggestion that individuals with such behavior may fall within the bipolar spectrum. The goal of the present study was to investigate the association between CBD with other behavioral addictions and ICD in a sample of individuals seeking treatment for CBD with and without criteria for inclusion in the bipolar spectrum (BS). *Method:* 414 CBD individuals were included, 296 (71.5%) did not fulfill any criteria for bipolar disorder (non-BS-CBD) and 118 (28.5%) reported occasional symptoms, but without reaching the diagnostic threshold for BD (BS-CBD). *Results:* the impulsive behaviors/ICD identified (N=414) were anger issues/intermittent explosive disorder (17.6%/8.2%), Internet abuse/Internet addiction (15.2%/4.1%), skin-picking /excoriation disorder (11.4%/3.1%), gambling/gambling disorder (11.1%/2.7%), excessive sex/hypersexuality disorder (10.1%/1.9%), stealing/kleptomania (7%/3.1%), hair-pulling/trichotillomania (5.6%/2.4%), arson/pyromania (1.0%/0.5%) and videogame abuse/videogame disorder (0.5%/0.2%). Compared to non-BS-CBD, BS-CBD group reported greater difficulty in dealing with anger issues (OR=3.86), stealing (OR=2.99), excessive sex (OR=2.09) and skin-picking (OR=2.03), they also reported greater frequency of intermittent explosive disorder (OR=2.17) and kleptomania (OR=6.16), all $ps < 0.05$. *Conclusion:* CBD may be a heterogenous category, treatment-seeking CBD individuals overlapping with the bipolar spectrum represent a subgroup of patients with a wider array of impulsive behaviors and specific therapeutic needs.

Keywords: compulsive buying disorder, behavioral addiction, impulse control disorder, bipolar spectrum