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What your eyes tell me: Theory of Mind in Bipolar Disorder

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess social- perceptual Theory of Mind in bipolar disorder (BD). 112 euthymic participants with BD I or BD II (65 with BD I and 47 with BD II) were compared to a group of 112 persons with no psychiatric diagnosis and 43 with unipolar depression (UD). They completed the task of the “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” (RMET).

The results show that participants with BD, I and II, as well as the group with UD performed significantly more poorly than the control group. As for the wrong answers, BDs mostly chose positive valence stimuli, while the UD group chose negative valence items.

The main limitation of this research is related to the characteristics of the cross-sectional study. It cannot detect at what time of the disorder these differences in emotion processing will appear with more intensity.

As for future research, we suggest interventions to improve the deficits in ToM in bipolar persons. The use of the RMET in the first stages of BD II could help to facilitate a correct diagnosis.

## Keywords

Bipolar Disorder; Unipolar Depression; Theory of Mind; “Reading the Mind in the Eyes”

## 1. Introduction

Theory of Mind (ToM) consists on the capacity to ascribe mental states to oneself and to others and the ability to respond accordingly (Adolphs, 2009; Allison et al., 2000;

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