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The diffusion of the diagnostic term bipolar disorder among the German public.

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Abstract

In 2005, 15 years after the introduction of the diagnosis in DSM-III, a telephone survey in Germany revealed that the public was still unfamiliar with the term bipolar disorder. Only 5.3 % of those questioned knew at the time that it denotes a mental illness. In the meantime, efforts have been made to spread the concept among the public. In the media there has been increasing mention of the disorder. Another telephone survey in 2017 showed that familiarity with the diagnostic term has grown substantially. 54.0 % of respondents now connected the term bipolar disorder with a mental illness.

Keywords: Public awareness, time trend, population survey

1. Introduction

The diagnosis of bipolar disorder has been introduced in 1990 with the third revision of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) (American Psychiatric Association, 1990). The World Health Association followed with the inclusion of the diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder in the tenth revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) (WHO, 1992). A telephone survey conducted among the German adult population in 2005 revealed that at the time the public was still unfamiliar with the term “bipolar disorder”. Only a few of those questioned (5.3

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