

Understanding How Workplace Interactions Impact Social Cognitive Performance, Self-esteem, and Self-stigma in Individuals with Bipolar Disorder

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Individuals with bipolar disorder (BD) have low employment rates, partly due to impaired cognitive performance. However, employment plays an important role in an individual's sense of purpose and quality of life. For those with BD, employment has been associated with enhanced self-satisfaction and reduced psychiatric symptoms, which in turn are linked to increased self-esteem and improved mood, as employment can be viewed as attaining important goals. Goal attainment is also negatively correlated with self-stigma, as social cognitive performance may decline when individuals face stigmatizing scenarios in the workplace. There is a lack of understanding of the relationships among social cognition, self-esteem, and self-stigma in the context of employment. This study aims to examine these relationships in individuals with BD over a two-month period of employment-related observation. Twenty-two individuals with BD were recruited from the Douglas Institute outpatient clinic for mood disorders. Given that they were all employed, they underwent assessments measuring the quality of workplace interactions, as well as their social cognitive performance, self-esteem, and self-stigma. To test our hypotheses, a repeated-measures ANOVA will be conducted to evaluate the effect of time on social cognitive performance, self-esteem, and self-stigma. Correlation analyses and a mediation model will also be used to examine relationships between workplace interactions and these outcomes. It is hypothesized that self-stigma will decrease before there is an increase in self-esteem and social cognitive performance, along with the expectation that self-stigma and social cognition are correlated and that self-stigma will impact social cognitive performance.

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