

Journal of Depression and Anxiety Forecast

Slower Perception of Time in Depressed and Suicidal Patients

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Dear Editor,

The purpose of this study was to determine the duration of the suicide process and its relation to time judgment and cognitive impulsivity. In this research, these cognitive variables besides some other variables were examined in four adult groups of both sexes. These four groups include: recent suicide attempters, suicidal ideators, non-suicidal depressed controls and healthy controls.

Regarding Cáceda's article I wish to provide some perspectives:

1. In this study, the effects and side effects of various medications used to treat patients with bipolar disorder, major depression, and unspecified depressive disorder were not considered.

Whereas, no medication is effective in all patients. Several classes of antidepressants are available and many of them have different mechanisms of action. The choice of medication to treat these diseases depends on several factors. Including course of illness, chronicity of the disorder, comorbidity with general medical illnesses or other mental disorders, family history of illness and treatment response, severity of symptoms, previous treatment responses to other acute phase treatments, patient priority, and potential drug-drug interactions [1].

There is a study which examined the cognitive differences between users of several types of antidepressants. In comparison with other antidepressants, vortioxetine versus nortriptyline, escitalopram, and the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor and tricyclic antidepressant classes was statistically more effective on the Digit Symbol Substitution Test [2].

According to the article, perception of time slowing has been associated with psychomotor retardation that is a common symptom of depression. On the other hand, based on Rosenblat JD et al., [3] antidepressants have a positive effect on psychomotor speed [1] and according to another study, choosing more activating medications (such as desipramine) is generally not helpful for patients with higher level of psychomotor retardation [1].

These suggest that time judgment may be related to medications and their type, the relation which has not been considered in this study.

2. In this study, the type of bipolar disorder and their therapeutic differences were not considered. Whereas cognitive impairment is more common in bipolar I, although it is present in both types [4] and treatment of bipolar disorder requires different strategies [1].

3. Finally as a clinical suggestion, if one episode is severe, preventive treatment can be used to control subsequent episodes and prevent suicidal behaviors.

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Received Date: 10 Jan 2021

Accepted Date: 14 Jan 2021

Published Date: 18 Jan 2021

Citation: Majidifard Z, Gharibzadeh S.

Slower Perception of Time in Depressed and Suicidal Patients. J Depress Anxiety Forecast. 2021; 4(2): 1025.

ISSN 2643-7139

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