ABSTRACT

TITLE:	What Others See: Bipolar Disorder in the Eyes of Society
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ABSTRACT: Bipolar Disorder (BPD) is a mental illness that over the years has become more frequently diagnosed yet continues to be misperceived by the general population. Past research shows that it is the stigmatization of mental illness that creates this misunderstanding of mental health, specifically certain disorders such as BPD. In this study, the perception of Bipolar Disorder (BPD) was assessed from 137 undergraduate level students. Participants were asked to rate a combination of social distancing, DSM-IV TR criteria of BPD and etiology of the disorder questions formatted in a questionnaire assessment. A one way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine a difference between subject's responses to the causation of BPD. There was a significant difference found between biological, psychological and environmental factors causing BPD (Figure 1) $F(2, 133) = 33.88$, $P<.001$. The results show participants are more likely to rate BPD as being caused by a psychological factor than both a biological factor $P= .002$, and an environmental factor $P=.001$. The difference between biological factors and environmental factors was also significantly different with $P= .001$. DSM-IV TR criteria for BPD, Schizophrenia, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), along with made up symptoms were analyzed with a one way repeated measures ANOVA to establish differences between criteria. Mean scores of each measure indicate significant findings $F(3, 110) = 23.99$, $P< .001$. Participants rated OCD symptoms (5.81) and made up symptoms (6.194) higher than actual BPD symptoms (5.61). Findings show that there is still a lack of knowledge regarding BPD especially in basic areas of causation and classification of symptoms. Results suggest there is a possible misconception of the causation of BPD in identifying the disorder as being more psychological, although there are no known causes for the disorder. Past research supports the idea that there is a strong genetic connection with BPD making it a more biological factor. In addition, results imply a misunderstanding of the actual criteria associated with BPD. This can also promote the need for continuous education regarding the subject matter of mental health.