

## S05-04 - CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND RECENT DATA ON THE PRODROME TO FIRST EPISODE MANIA

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**Background:** Little is known about the early phases of bipolar disorders (BPAD) and most of current knowledge derives from putative “high-risk” studies conducted in populations of bipolar off-spring; such information may therefore be relevant only to a subgroup of at-risk subjects.

**Methods:** Retrospective assessment of the phase preceding the emergence of mania and of premorbid characteristics of patients treated for a first episode of psychotic mania. The collected data was used mainly to generate hypotheses.

**Results:** Before onset of a first episode of psychotic mania, patients go through a phase of change from previous mental state where they present mood symptoms, sleep disruption and general functional decline. These clinical manifestations are likely to have low specificity. However, their occurrence in patients presenting certain risk factors or markers of vulnerability that were identified at a relatively high prevalence in our sample, may be an indicator of impending first episode mania.

**Limitations:** This is a retrospective study, in a small sample of patients presenting with psychotic mania. Criteria identified need therefore to be validated in larger prospective studies.

**Conclusions:** Early identification of patients at risk to develop a first episode of psychotic mania is unlikely to be possible on the basis of symptoms alone. However, the occurrence of certain clinical characteristics in patients who have risk factors or markers of vulnerability to BPAD may be a sign of impending first episode mania.