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IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT PROBLEMS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER: A WORLDWIDE EXPERT SURVEY

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Aims: We aimed to explore the expert perspective on relevant issues of individuals with bipolar disorder. The specific aims are to identify problems in functioning important to individuals with BD and to quantify these using the ICF.

Method: An online survey on functioning in BD was conducted. For each ICF domain one question was presented. Recruited participants were psychiatrists, general physicians, psychologists, nurses and social workers worldwide. Answers were linked to the ICF according to predefined rules (Cieza, 2001). Data analyses include frequencies of ICF categories named by experts.

Results: Health professionals from all WHO-world regions and from different professional backgrounds accepted our invitation to participate. The Americas was the highest represented region (36%) and a significant part of the professionals involved were psychiatrists. From all the concepts contained in the answers, body functions categories with highest frequency of appearance were *emotional functions* (3,5%), mentioned by 62% of the experts and *sleep functions* (2,4%) mentioned by 58%. The body structure *brain* corresponds to 2% of the total categories obtained and was included by 56% of the experts. *Maintaining one's health* was the most mentioned activity and participation (2,8%), referred by 36% of the participants and important environmental factors include *health services* (4,8%) and *immediate family* (3,8%), which appeared in 82% of the questionnaires.

Conclusion: The present study is an important step in applying of the ICF to BD. It also shows an important level of agreement between experts around the world regarding central issues of the disorder.

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