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Stressful Life Events and Borderline Personality Disorder Traits

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ABSTRACT:

Borderline personality disorder is a mental disorder linked to considerable impairment. Multiple studies have found frequent traumatic experiences in childhood among BPD patients, and we therefor address the following problems: One, what types of SLE are associated with borderline personality disorder traits? Two, to what extent is the association between the combined SLEs and BPD accounted for by familial genetic and environmental background factors? In total 2801 twins participated from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) Twin Panel. Negative binomial Poisson regression was used to explore which SLEs could predict BPD traits. An Elastic Net penalized regression analysis with a subsequent biometric co-twin control was performed to develop the final logistic regression model for prediction and to differentiate between environmental and genetic factors in our sample. We found that in childhood, life-threatening experiences and an unpredictable and unsafe environment is associated with the development of BPD traits. In adulthood, life-threatening experiences, economic issues, and relationship conflicts had the same association. Our results indicate that these experiences predict 22% of the risk for BPD traits. In the adjusted model, 41.7% of shared environmental, 16.7% of additive genetic, and 5.9% of individual-specific environmental effects for BPD traits could be explained by SLEs. In the debate about how stressful life events are associated with the development of BPD traits, our results point to the shared family environment as a common cause for both the SLEs and the development of BPD traits.

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