

Photoperiod, temperature, and bipolar disorder.

Benzineb S, Choubani Z, Ouali U, Douki S: Psychiatric Department A – Razi Hospital – La Manouba – Tunisia.

Many authors (Khanna R, 1992; Modai I, 1994) have reported an increased prevalence of manic vs. depressive episodes in bipolar disorder, and more bipolar than unipolar forms of affective disorders. The role of environmental factors in general and climatic factors in particular, has been highlighted.

The aim of our work was to assess the relationship between affective recurrences and climatic variables, in a sample of bipolar patients totalising 732 hospitalisations in an adult psychiatric department in Tunisia.

We found that manic recurrences were correlated with photoperiod (i.e. the duration of light during a 24-hour period), while the spring peak observed in hospitalisations for mania was inversely correlated with temperature extremes, and thermal variance.

Depressive episodes were significantly correlated throughout the year with photoperiod and thermal variance.

The authors finally discuss the main pathophysiological hypotheses, as well as therapeutic and preventive implications.