

Review of: "Reasons for diagnostic delays in Bipolar Disorder: Systematic review and narrative synthesis"

Jesús Jaime Moreno Escobar¹

¹ Instituto Politécnico Nacional

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article titled "Reasons for Diagnostic Delays in Bipolar Disorder: Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis," by Nindiya Mehra et al., addresses the critical issue of delays in diagnosing bipolar disorder (BD) and explores the individual, social, and clinical factors contributing to these delays. The study employs a systematic review and narrative synthesis methodology to analyze 21 relevant studies retrieved from electronic databases.

Advantages: One of the notable strengths of the study is its comprehensive investigation into the reasons for diagnostic delays in BD, covering diverse factors such as misdiagnosis, healthcare challenges, mental health stigma, the complex nature of BD, and individual factors. By synthesizing findings from multiple studies, the authors provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges associated with timely diagnosis in BD.

The thematic analysis employed in the study facilitates the identification of common themes across the included studies, enhancing the understanding of the complex interplay of factors contributing to diagnostic delays. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on educating individuals, families, and clinicians on the symptomology of BD and addressing mental health stigma underscores the importance of multi-faceted approaches to improve diagnosis and treatment outcomes.

Disadvantages: While the study offers valuable insights, several limitations need to be addressed. Firstly, the search strategy may have been limited by the inclusion of only four electronic databases and the exclusion of grey literature, potentially leading to publication bias and overlooking relevant studies. Additionally, the absence of a meta-analysis due to methodological diversity among the included studies limits the quantitative synthesis of findings and may affect the generalizability of conclusions.

Furthermore, the quality appraisal of included studies using different assessment tools introduces variability in the evaluation of study quality and may impact the reliability of synthesized evidence. Moreover, the lack of consideration for demographic factors such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status in the synthesis of findings could overlook important nuances in the experiences of individuals with BD and diagnostic delays.

Areas of Opportunity: To enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings, future research should address these limitations by employing a broader search strategy encompassing diverse databases and including grey literature. Additionally, efforts to standardize quality appraisal methods and consider demographic variables in data synthesis would strengthen the validity and generalizability of the synthesized evidence.

Moreover, prospective studies with longitudinal follow-up of BD patients are warranted to elucidate the diagnostic process and inform interventions aimed at reducing diagnostic delays. Furthermore, targeted public health policies and educational initiatives are needed to raise awareness about BD symptoms and combat mental health stigma, thereby facilitating early detection and intervention.

Language and Presentation: The article is well-written and effectively communicates the research objectives, methods, and findings. However, there are instances of overly complex language and verbose explanations that could be streamlined for clarity and conciseness. Additionally, the manuscript would benefit from improved organization and formatting to enhance readability and accessibility for readers.

In conclusion, despite its limitations, the study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of diagnostic delays in BD and provides valuable insights for future research, clinical practice, and public health policy. By addressing the identified limitations and building upon the strengths of the study, researchers can further advance knowledge in this important area and improve outcomes for individuals with BD.