



## American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.

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### Sample Article: Psychiatry

#### Citation:

Author: El-Mallakh RS, Vöhringer PA, Ostacher MM

Title: [Antidepressants Worsen Rapid-Cycling Course in Bipolar Depression: A STEP-BD Randomized Clinical Trial](#)

Journal: Journal of Affective Disorders

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#### Questions:

- 1) This study found that for patients with bipolar I disorder with rapid cycling who are currently stable on a mood stabilizer and an antidepressant, when compared with patients who are not given an antidepressant, continued use of an antidepressant is likely to lead to
  - a. improvement in both the patient's depressive and manic episodes
  - b. increased manic episodes despite improvement in the number of depressive episodes
  - c. no difference in the outcome seen with either group
  - d. a need for increased doses of the mood stabilizer to maintain stabilization
  - e. **an increased number of depressive episodes**

**Key: E**

- 2) Although the mechanism of the effect is unknown, the authors hypothesize that the induction of rapid cycling in bipolar I subjects may be related to a particular variant in which of the following genes?
  - a. **Serotonin transporter (SLC6A4)**
  - b. Norepinephrine transporter (SLC6A2)
  - c. Catechol O-methyltransferase (COMT)
  - d. Monoamine oxidase A (MAOA)
  - e. Dopamine receptor type 2 (DRD2)

**Key: A**

- 3) A 31-year-old man with a history of bipolar I disorder with rapid cycling presented to the clinic with a depressive episode and was treated with sodium valproate and sertraline. After one month, the patient is symptom free. According to the article by El-Mallakh and colleagues, which of the following would be the best choice for maintenance treatment now that the patient is stabilized?
- a. Maintain the current medications at the current doses.
  - b. Continue the sodium valproate but discontinue the sertraline.**
  - c. Discontinue both medications and start quetiapine.
  - d. Continue both medications but add olanzapine.
  - e. Discontinue the medications and begin a course of cognitive behavior therapy.

**Key: B**

- 4) A patient with bipolar I disorder with rapid cycling reports worsening depression despite have had a past positive response to citalopram. The patient has been taking lithium and citalopram for the past three months at average recommended doses and the lithium is at a therapeutic range. According to the article by El-Mallakh and colleagues, which of the following approaches to treating the patient's current depressive episode is best supported by the available literature?
- a. Increase citalopram to a maximum safe dose
  - b. Continue citalopram but increase the lithium to a maximum safe dose
  - c. Discontinue citalopram and start bupropion**
  - d. Discontinue lithium and start aripiprazole
  - e. Continue the current medications but add olanzapine to the regimen.

**Key: C**

- 5) Which of the following is a valid limitation of this study?
- a. The study did not assess whether the bipolar patients had cyclothymic temperament that may confound findings.**
  - b. The study did not utilize high enough n size for statistical significance.
  - c. Between group analysis was used however within-group analysis was not.
  - d. Number of recurrent episodes was assessed as a total number without dividing this number into individual depressive and manic episodes.
  - e. A posteriori reasoning should have been used as opposed to a priori reasoning given the retrospective nature of this study.

**Key: A**