

Socio-Economic Risk Factors for Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder: a Swedish Register-Based Study

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that there is an association between social-economical status in childhood and the development of schizophrenia. The pattern for bipolar disorder is less clear. This study aims at investigating socio-economic risk factors for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and to compare the results to identify common risk factors for the two disorders. Method: We used a study cohort based on individuals in the Swedish Population Registry born in 1973-1985 and identified cases using the National Patient Registry. Data on variables was linked from other registers by using the individuals with the Multi-generations Registry to link biological father and mother to the subject. Data was analysed using logistic regression in SAS and we created univariate models adjusted for gender and birth year as well as multivariate models. Results: In the multivariable models risk factors birth year, gender (male vs. female), housing, urbanicity, immigrant status and parental history of disorder were all significant over-risks for schizophrenia. For bipolar, birth year, housing and one of the patient's parents being born outside of Sweden were found to be significant over-risks while gender (male vs. female) was found to be an under-risk. 2nd generation immigrant status was not significant for bipolar disorder. Conclusion: Due to the results from the analyses of the multivariate models, birth year, gender, housing and one of parents born abroad were significant risk factors common to both disorders. Discussion: More research, especially for bipolar disorder, is called for, preferably in the form of prospective longitudinal studies so as to be able to assign causality. Also, the gene-environment interaction aspects of effect need to be investigated further.

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