



THE PHOENIX RISES? COMPARING DEFICIENT EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION, THE CBCL-DYSREGULATION PROFILE, AND THE CBCL-BIPOLAR PROFILE

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Introduction

Studies using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) as a measure of impaired self-regulation are now prevalent. There is some controversy as to whether the CBCL can be used as a predictive tool for bipolar disorder. The investigation into children with this constellation of symptoms led our group to propose an end to any name for the profile that included the word “bipolar,” (by offering a “Requiem” to the name in 2008).

We proposed, instead, concentrating on the impaired self-regulation of these children and naming the profile the “CBCL-Dysregulation Profile” (CBCL-DP) since the outcomes of these children in adulthood are heterogeneous and do not appear to exclusively include bipolar disorder. There has now been a resurgence of the use of the CBCL-Bipolar Profile name in concert with a new entity, Disorder of Emotional Self Regulation (DESR) which is a subsyndromal measure of the CBCL-DP.

We examine here whether the addition of a DESR phenotype adds to the predictive validity of the CBCL-DP for disorders of adult self-regulation.

Method

- Parents (90% mothers) completed CBCLs on 2076 Dutch children aged 4-18.
- Children reassessed when all were adults (14-years later)
- DSM diagnoses in adulthood made by the CIDI and the DIS
- Latent-class-derived CBCL-DP in childhood was used to predict adult outcomes using logistic regression in SPSS
- Computed the sum of T-scores of Attention Problems, Aggressive Behavior, and Anxious-Depressed scales
 - Scores between 180 and 210 categorized as DESR
 - Scores ≥ 210 categorized as “CBCL-Bipolar profile”

Results – Overlap among profiles

	Number (percent) in “Deficient Emotional Self Regulation” Category			Total
	Control	DESR	“CBCL-Bipolar Profile”	
CBCL-DP Negative	1743 (1.0)	248 (0.9)	7 (0.1)	1998
CBCL-DP Positive	1 (0)	30 (0.1)	47 (0.9)	78
Total	1744	278	54	2076

- The “CBCL-Bipolar Profile” was very nearly identical to the CBCL-DP derived by LCA, with 87% overlap
- Only 11% of the DESR group also had the CBCL-DP, although 13% of the total sample was DESR
- Only 25% of the children in the DESR category had T-score elevations greater than 60 on all three component scales.

Results – Predictive validity

Including DESR in logistic regression models did not affect the predictive validity of the CBCL-DP as previously published (Althoff et al 2010). Neither DESR, nor CBCL-DP, nor the “CBCL-Bipolar Profile” predicted adult bipolar disorder, although the rate was notably low (0.4%) in this sample. The only adult outcome predicted by DESR was anxiety disorders (OR = 1.94, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions

- Quantitative measurement of multiple aspects of self-regulation can inform our understanding of developmental psychopathology.
- DESR children most commonly did not have elevations on all three component scales of the CBCL.
- There is little evidence in this sample that the predictive validity of DESR adds to the predictive validity of the CBCL-Dysregulation Profile which appears to only predict adult bipolar disorder in high risk samples.
- The phoenix has not risen. The name of the “CBCL-Bipolar Profile” can remain in the grave in favor of a more descriptive moniker.

This work was funded by NIMH grant K08-MH082116 to RRA