***What have Observational Studies taught us about the Emergence and Course of Bipolar Disorder (BP) Among Youth?***

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**Objective**: To present the prodromal symptoms before the onset of bipolar disorder (BP) in youth, ascertained through the Pittsburgh Bipolar Offspring Study (BIOS) **Methods**: 236 parents with BP I/II and their children (n= 388) and 141 community control parents and their children (n=251) were recruited and assessed with standard instruments. All subjects have been followed for about 15 years. **Results**: Offspring of parents with BP are at about 25% increased risk to develop BP disorder. These offspring also are at higher risk to develop depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and behavioral disorders. Except for substance abuse, these disorders predate the onset of BP. The presence of significant depression/anxiety, mood lability, and subsyndromal manic symptoms and having a parent who had early-onset BP disorder (e.g., < 18 years old) increased offsprings’ risk to develop BP to 50%. **Conclusions**: BP usually onsets during youth, particularly in youth who have significant mood and anxiety symptomatology and whose parents had early onset BP. Early identification and treatment of these youth may help to delay and in the best case scenario prevent the onset of BP disorder.