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# LITHIUM KNOWLEDGE AMONG PATIENTS WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER- A STRUCTURED ASSESSMENT

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Bipolar disorder (BD) is a chronic and recurrent illness. Lithium is the main treatment for bipolar disorder prophylaxis. Median prevalence of lithium non-adherence is 44.7%. Incidence Lithium toxicity is 5.4 cases /100,000 per year .Higher the knowledge level, the higher the adherence and the lower the toxicity risks. Lithium Knowledge Test (LKT) identifies patients' practical and pharmacologic knowledge. Hence, we decided to use validated Lithium Knowledge Test (LKT)-Tamil version on bipolar disorder patients who were on lithium and their relatives, to estimate their knowledge about Lithium therapy

**Aim:** To assess the Knowledge about Lithium therapy among Bipolar Disorder patients and their care givers.

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**Methodology:** Patients and care givers were assessed for knowledge about lithium using validated Lithium knowledge questionnaire (Tamil version) and scores were obtained.

**Result:** Out of 39 patients, 36 participants were getting treatment for manic episode and 3 participants were getting treatment for depressive episode. The mean LKT scores of patient and relatives were 9.52 (SD=4.32) and 8.53 (SD=4.65) respectively. Negative Pearson's correlation was found between lithium knowledge score and age of the patient ( $p=0.033$ ). Positive spearman's rho correlation was found between patient's knowledge and number of years of education ( $p=0.005$ ). Negative spearman's rho correlation was found between patient's knowledge and age of onset of illness ( $p=0.039$ ). Positive correlation was found between patient's lithium knowledge and number of episodes of illness ( $p=0.026$ ). Positive correlation was also found between patient's knowledge and their care givers knowledge ( $p=0.013$ ). Others factors like socioeconomic status, duration of illness, duration of lithium treatment and number of hospitalization had no influence on knowledge.

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**Conclusion:** Knowledge about lithium therapy was inadequate among patients and care givers. Age of patient, number of years of education, age of onset of illness and number of episodes had correlation with patient's lithium knowledge. Good knowledge about lithium in care givers tends to influence knowledge of their patients.

**Keywords:** Lithium, Bipolar Affective disorder, Lithium Knowledge Test, Compliance, Relapse, Adherence