

AFFECTIVE INSTABILITY AND IMPULSIVITY
IN BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

Affective instability and impulsivity are primary features of borderline personality disorder (BPD). We examined the effect of an interaction between these features, represented by FFM analogues of negative affectivity and disinhibition, on the expression of BPD symptoms. Our sample consisted of college undergraduates, a portion of whom endorsed clinically significant borderline personality features, assessed twice over two years. Results indicate that the interaction between affective instability and impulsivity accounted for a significant amount of variance in BPD symptoms, measured both concurrently and prospectively. These findings suggest that individuals high in both negative affectivity and disinhibition exhibited increased levels of BPD symptomatology, even after controlling for comorbid mood and substance use disorders. These results are important for understanding the etiology and course of BPD and for improving assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of BPD.