



Bipolar Disorder



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What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a type of mood disorder, characterized by alternating episodes of elevated and depressed mood states. During a manic episode, individuals commonly feel overly happy or irritable, over-confident, full of energy, and have lots of ambitious plans and ideas. During a depressive episode, the person would experience persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest in usually enjoyable activities, pessimistic, hopeless, and fatigue.

What are the causes of Bipolar Disorder?

➤ Genetic factors

Twins and first degree relatives of individuals with bipolar disorder have a higher chance of developing this disorder.

➤ Neurotransmitter imbalance

Studies found abnormal levels of neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and serotonin, in the brains of individuals with bipolar disorder.

➤ Environmental factors

Drug abuse, and other stressful events in life such as loss of jobs, relationship problems, etc.

How do I know if I have Bipolar Disorder?

1. Manic state

- Elated mood : persistent and excessive feelings of happiness, elation, and overly optimistic attitude; irritability, easily provoked by trivial matters, or even aggression to people or destruction of properties.
- Flight of ideas : racing thoughts, rapid speech, hoarse voice from talking too much, over-blown self-esteem, arrogance.
- Increased activity and energy : over-friendliness; flight of ideas; abnormally high activity level all day; simultaneous involvement in multiple projects but failing to complete tasks; impulsivity manifested through being overly generous or spending sprees; hypersexuality as shown through excessive grooming, casual sex, increased sex drive; and reduced need for sleep yet remaining energetic all the time.

2. Depressive state

- Depressed mood: lack of interest; pessimistic, appeared unhappy and low in spirit; loss of hope about future; avoidance in contacting others.
- Retarded thinking: slowness in thinking and verbal response; speaks in soft voice.
- Lack of motivation: becomes passive, with decrease in activity; slowness in motion; may stay on bed most of the time. In severe cases, basic self-care (e.g. oral intake) might be impaired or need assistance; suicidal ideas or acts might be present.

What are the treatments for Bipolar Disorder?

1. Medication

- Mood stabilizers :
Such as Valproate Sodium and Lithium
- Anti-depressants
- Anti-psychotics

2. Electroconvulsive therapy

- Mainly used for severely depressed persons

3. Psychotherapy

- Cognitive behavioral therapy aims at changing the individual's irrational thinking and behavioural pattern, so that the people can cope with one's problems and symptoms more objectively and effectively.

4. Rehabilitation training

- Vocational rehabilitative training :
Training to improve vocational skills and work attitude
- Self-care training :
Training to improve self-care skills, safety awareness, and knowledge of community support networks