

BIPOLAR DISORDER

WHAT IS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

Bipolar Disorder is a mood disorder where patients experience intense mood swings. These swings can make them feel either:

- A high mood - Mania or Hypomania (a milder form of mania) or
- A low mood - Depression

Below are the different types of Bipolar Disorders:

Bipolar I disorder

- A person with Bipolar I Disorder goes through at least one Manic episode* that may happen before or after a Hypomanic episode** or a Major Depressive episode

Bipolar II disorder

- A person with Bipolar II Disorder goes through at least one Major Depressive episode, and at least one Hypomanic episode, but no Manic episode

Cyclothymic Disorder

- A person goes through many Hypomanic episodes and Depressive episodes for at least two years

*A Manic episode is a period of extreme energy and excitement

**A Hypomanic episode is a milder form of a Manic episode

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BIPOLAR DISORDER

Patients with Bipolar Disorder experience episodes of depression and Mania at different times, and the symptoms can vary among individuals.

Below are the symptoms (signs) of Depression, Mania and Hypomania:

Depressive symptoms include

- Constant low moods
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Lethargy (tiredness)
- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Recurring suicidal thoughts

Manic symptoms include

- Happy mood
- More irritable
- Requires less sleep but still feels energetic
- Fast-moving and repetitive thoughts
- Pressured speech (talking very fast)
- Grandiose delusions (e.g. false beliefs that they have a special mission, or have special powers)
- Engaging in high-risk behaviours



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Patients experiencing Mania are more likely to encounter difficulties at work, home, and school. They may also experience psychotic symptoms like hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that are not real) or delusions (having false beliefs).

Patients with Hypomania can often still function well at work.

HOW TO MANAGE BIPOLAR DISORDER?



PHARMACOTHERAPY

The main treatment for Bipolar Disorder is medication. Depending on the symptoms the patient experiences, they may be prescribed different types of medications like mood stabilizers, antidepressants, or antipsychotics. It is important to note that it can take a few weeks for the medication to have the best effect on the patient's condition.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY

Psychological therapy is useful because it helps patients become more stable, allowing them to better understand their symptoms and learn how to manage their condition.



If you think you are experiencing these symptoms, it is best to seek help from a mental health professional. They can guide you in finding the right treatment that best suits your needs.



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