

Bipolar Disorder

- ❖ Bipolar disorder is a major illness of mind. It is also called manic-depressive illness.
- ❖ People with bipolar disorder go through unusual mood changes.
- ❖ Sometimes they feel very happy and “up,” and are much more active than usual. This is called mania.
- ❖ And sometimes people with bipolar disorder feel very sad and “down,” and are much less active. This is called depression.
- ❖ Bipolar disorder can also cause changes in energy and behaviour.

Causes:

Though there are various theories proposed as causes for Bipolar disorder, it is evident that it can run in families.

It can also be seen in some patients suffering certain brain illness or injury.

Patients with certain physical illness can also manifest symptoms of Bipolar illness.

One of the major theory is of Imbalance of Neurotransmitters in the brain.

Symptoms:

People having a manic episode are characterized by a heightened mood, pressured speech, flight of ideas, heightened distractibility, hyperactivity, increased energy, and a decreased need for sleep.

- Feel very “up” or “high”
- Talk really fast about a lot of different things
- Be agitated, irritable,
- Have trouble relaxing or sleeping, sleeplessness
- Think they can do a lot of things at once and are more active than usual
- Do risky things, like spend a lot of money or have reckless sex.

Over patient's lifetime there are one or more manic episodes, and in almost all patients, also one or more depressive episodes; critically, in between episodes, they are generally free of symptoms.

- The first episode usually has an onset in the late teens or early 20s. Over 90% of patients will have their first episode of illness by the time they reach 50.
- Manic episodes last from weeks to several months.



- Depressive episodes typically appear gradually, over several weeks or longer and can last for several months. Poor concentration and memory, fatigue, appetite change (loss or, more often, increase) and sleep changes (Insomnia or, more commonly, Hypersomnia).
- Most of the depressive episodes seen in bipolar disorder last about 6 months.

Treatment:

- Medication includes: Depending on the nature of the episode and the degree/intensity of the episode various classes of medication are used they include, Antipsychotics, Antidepressants, Benzodiazepines, and Mood stabilizers.
- Mood stabilizers and certain other classes of medication can be used as prophylaxis to prevent further episodes
- Psychotherapy is also proven effective which includes Psychodynamic Therapy, Cognitive Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy and Family Therapy
- Social support systems and education about the illness play a major role in effective management of the illness

