

Opinion Article

Neurochemical causes of bipolar disorder, diagnosis and their impact

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ABOUT THE STUDY

A complicated and sometimes misdiagnosed mental illness, bipolar disorder is marked by extreme mood fluctuations, such as manic or hypomanic episodes and depressive ones. A person's everyday life, relationships, and general well-being can all be significantly impacted by these severe mood swings.

The occurrence of at least one manic episode which may come before or after hypomanic or significant depressive episodes is exactly characterises bipolar I disorder. Severe manic episodes are characterised by heightened or agitated moods, increased energy or activity, and additional symptoms include diminished sleep needs, grandiosity, fast speaking, and dangerous behaviour. These episodes can lead to significant impairment in social or occupational functioning and may require hospitalization. Compared to manic episodes, hypomanic episodes are milder and do not result in the same degree of functional impairment. Nonetheless, they can still be disruptive and are often followed by periods of significant depression.

Cyclothymic disorder and other types

Another form of bipolar disorder is cyclothymic disorder, which involves chronic fluctuating moods with periods of hypomania and mild depression. These mood changes are less extreme than those seen in Bipolar I or II but can still impact an individual's life. There are also other specified and unspecified bipolar and related disorders, which include bipolar symptoms that do not fit the criteria for the other three diagnoses.

Causes and risk factors

Although the exact cause of bipolar disease is unknown, a mix of neurochemical, environmental, and genetic variables are thought to be responsible. and neurochemical factors. Family history plays a significant role individuals with a parent or sibling with bipolar disorder are at higher risk. However, environmental factors such as high-stress levels, traumatic experiences, and significant life changes can also trigger or exacerbate the condition. Neurochemically, imbalances in neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, are thought to contribute to the disorder.

Symptoms and diagnosis

Diagnosing bipolar disorder involves a thorough assessment by a mental health professional, including a detailed history of mood swings, behaviour patterns, and family history. During manic or hypomanic episodes, individuals may exhibit behaviours such as excessive energy, reduced need for sleep, inflated self-esteem, talkativeness, racing thoughts, distractibility, and engagement in risky activities. In contrast, depressive episodes are characterized by persistent sadness or emptiness, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite or weight, sleep disturbances, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt, and suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

Because the symptoms of bipolar disorder can overlap with other mental health conditions, such as major depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), accurate diagnosis can be challenging. Misdiagnosis is common, which underscores the importance of a comprehensive evaluation by a qualified healthcare provider.

Treatment and management

Medications commonly prescribed include mood stabilizers, such as lithium and anticonvulsants, antipsychotic medications, and antidepressants. It is need to work closely with a healthcare provider to find the right medication regimen, as the response to treatment can vary widely among individuals.

Psychotherapy, particularly Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), is an important component of treatment. Other therapeutic approaches, such as Interpersonal and Social Rhythm Therapy (IPSRT), focus on stabilizing daily routines and improving interpersonal relationships.

Lifestyle modifications can also play a significant role in managing bipolar disorder. Regular physical activity, a healthy diet, adequate sleep, and stress reduction techniques can help stabilize mood and improve overall well-being. Establishing a consistent daily routine and maintaining strong social support networks are equally important.

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Bipolar disorder is a lifelong condition that requires ongoing management and support. With appropriate treatment and coping strategies, individuals with bipolar disorder can lead fulfilling and productive lives. Early diagnosis, personalized treatment

plans, and a strong support system are need components of effective management. By fostering understanding and reducing stigma, society can better support those living with bipolar disorder, enabling them to thrive despite the challenges they face.