

Review Article

Bipolar Disorder and Homoeopathic Therapeutics

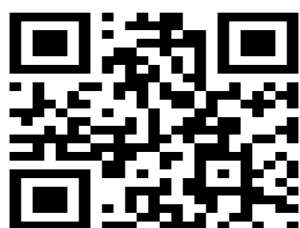
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ABSTRACT

Bipolar disorder is a recurrent chronic disorder characterised by fluctuations in mood state and energy. It affects more than 1% of the world's population irrespective of nationality, ethnic origin, or socioeconomic status. Bipolar disorder is one of the main causes of disability among young people, leading to cognitive and functional impairment and raised mortality, particularly death by suicide. Accurate diagnosis of bipolar disorder is difficult in clinical practice because onset is most commonly a depressive episode and looks similar to unipolar depression. Moreover, there are currently no valid biomarkers for the disorder. Therefore, the role of clinical assessment remains key. Detection of hypomanic periods and longitudinal assessment are crucial to differentiate bipolar disorder from other conditions. Current knowledge of the evolving homeopathic intervention and psychological strategies in bipolar disorder is of utmost importance.

Keywords: Bipolar, homoeopathy, mania, depression



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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Bipolar disorder is an episodic disturbance with interspersed periods of depressed and elevated mood. Elevated mood can be hypomania (mild or short lived) or mania (severe or chronic).

Lifetime risk of developing it is 1-2%, usually in the twenties where men and women are equally affected.

Cyclothymic Disorder (Cyclothymia) defined by periods of hypomanic symptoms as well as periods of depressive symptoms lasting for at least 2 years. However, the symptoms do not meet the diagnostic requirements for a hypomanic episode and a depressive episode.

Sometimes a person might experience symptoms of bipolar disorder that do

not match the three categories listed above, which is referred to as “other specified and unspecified bipolar and related disorders.”

DSM-IV Classification

Bipolar I disorder	Bipolar II disorder
One or more manic episodes	One hypomanic episode
One or more major depressive episodes	Depressive episodes are more frequent and more intense than manic episodes

Signs and symptoms

People with bipolar disorder experience periods of unusually intense emotion, changes in sleep patterns and activity levels, and uncharacteristic behaviours- often without recognizing their likely harmful or undesirable effects. These distinct periods are called “mood episodes.” Mood episodes

are very different from the moods and behaviours that are typical for the person. During an episode, the symptoms last every day for most of the day. Episodes may also last for longer periods, such as several days or weeks.

Manic episode	Depressive episode
Feel very up,high, elated or irritable or touchy	Feel very sad, down,,” empty, worried, or hopeless
Feel jumpy or wired	Feel slowed down or restless
Have a decreased need for sleep	Have trouble falling asleep, wake up too early, or sleep too much
Have a loss of appetite	Experience increased appetite and weight gain
Talk very fast about a lot of different things	Talk very slowly, feel like they have nothing to say, forget a lot
Feel like their thoughts are racing	Have trouble concentrating or making decisions
Think they can do a lot of things at once	Feel unable to do even simple things
Do risky things that show poor judgment, such as eat and drink excessively, spend or give away a lot of money, or have reckless sex	Have little interest in almost all activities, a decreased or absent sex drive, or an inability to experience pleasure (“anhedonia”)
Feel like they are unusually important, talented, or powerful	Feel hopeless or worthless, think about death or suicide

Sometimes people experience both manic and depressive symptoms in the same episode. This kind of episode is called an episode with mixed features. People experiencing an episode with mixed features may feel very sad, empty, or hopeless, while, at the same, time feeling extremely energized.

A person may have bipolar disorder even if their symptoms are less extreme. For example, some people with bipolar disorder (Bipolar II) experience hypomania, a less severe form of mania. During a hypomanic episode, a person may feel very good, be able to get things done, and keep up with day-to-day life. The person may not feel that anything is wrong, but family and friends may recognize the changes in mood or activity levels as possible bipolar disorder. Without proper treatment, people with hypomania can develop severe mania or depression.

Proper diagnosis and treatment can help people with bipolar disorder lead healthy and active lives. Talking with a doctor or other licensed health care provider is the first step. The health care provider can complete a

physical exam and order necessary medical tests to rule out other conditions. The health care provider may then conduct a mental health evaluation or provide a referral to a trained mental health care provider, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker who has experience in diagnosing and treating bipolar disorder. Mental health care providers usually diagnose bipolar disorder based on a person’s symptoms, lifetime history, experiences, and, in some cases, family history. Accurate diagnosis in youth is particularly important.

Role of homoeopathy:

Ignatia Amara: Depressive phase

Ignatia Amara is a homeopathic medicine used in depressive phase of bipolar disorder. Persons who need Ignatia Amara suffer episodes of sadness, hopelessness, unhappiness and weepiness. Other symptoms include a desire for loneliness, brooding in solitude and getting offended easily. A history of grief, disappointments, loss of loved ones or broken relationships are said to be at the root of such cases. Rapidly altering moods – from sadness to happiness, weeping to laughing – are other unique symptoms to

look out for while prescribing Ignatia Amara.

Lachesis Muta: Manic phase

Lachesis Muta is a good homeopathic medicine for bipolar disorder in its manic phase. Symptoms guiding use of Lachesis Muta are increased mental activity, excitement, irritability, restlessness, violent behaviour, need to do everything rapidly and loud bursts of anger. Other symptoms are excessive talkativeness, mania for work and shopping.

Veratrum Album: Manic phase

Homeopathic medicine Veratrum Album is most useful in case of violent mania with shrieking, desire to cut or tear things. A plethora of laughing, scolding and running from place to place are other symptoms such persons show. This violent mania alternates with silence.

AurumMetallicum: Extreme hopelessness and suicidal thoughts

AurumMetallicum is an excellent homeopathic medicine for bipolar disorder in which the major symptoms are extreme hopelessness with thoughts of suicide. Persons prescribed with homeopathic medicine AurumMetallicum will be sad and feel that life is a burden. Their self-esteem is low and they are severely critical of themselves. They long for death with constant thoughts of suicide.

Staphysagria: Sudden bursts of anger

In case of bipolar disorder where persons suffer from sudden bursts of anger. Such persons will have a tendency to suppress anger, but will be given into sudden fits of rage during which they are likely to throw or break things. Poor self-confidence, self-pity, reproaching oneself, getting offended easily and feelings of worthlessness are seen. Case analysis will reveal a history of some sort of humiliation, guilt, physical/sexual abuse.

Medorrhinum: Severe mood swings

Medorrhinum is the most useful for bipolar disorder with extreme mood changes. Hurriedness, anxiety, restlessness, impatience and abruptness are some other guiding symptoms for its prescription. Other accompanying symptoms are rudeness, excitement and high sex drive. These are generally followed by a depressive phase, where symptoms such as sadness,

gloominess, tearfulness and hopelessness are seen.

CONCLUSION

Bipolar disorder is a major public health problem associated with significant morbidity and a high mortality risk. Several factors make treatment complex, including the fluctuation of mood episodes and the effects of these episodes on patient well-being, treatment nonadherence, and comorbid psychiatric disorders.

Homoeopathy is a cost effective mode of treatment for this condition and comparatively safe. This leads to healthier life and thus helping form a better society with improved quality of life.

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