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Common **antidepressants** 'linked to 35% greater risk of being diagnosed with **bipolar** disorder or **mania'**  
  
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* A study found a link between certain **antidepressants** and **bipolar** disorder
* Researchers examined 21,000 adults receiving treatment for depression
* Those adults had a 1.1% risk of being diagnosed with **bipolar** or **mania**
* But patients taking **antidepressants** had a 35% greater risk of diagnosis

Taking certain **antidepressants** for depression can increase your risk of developing other mental health conditions, experts have warned.

Two common types of the drugs - serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and venlafazine - were found to carry the highest risks of later diagnoses of **mania** and **bipolar** disorder.

Patients prescribed the medication for major depression were found to be 35 per cent more likely to develop **bipolar** or **mania**.

Yet, researchers aren't clear whether the diagnoses are more closely tied to latent **bipolar** disorder or the **antidepressants**.

The study concluded that scientists need to develop better ways to predict future risks of **mania** or **bipolar**.

Researchers investigated anonymized medical records of more than 21,000 adults who received treatment for major - but not **bipolar** - depression between 2006 and 2013.

The patients underwent treatment at a large provider of inpatient and community mental healthcare in London.

The team looked at diagnoses of **bipolar** disorder or **mania** that followed original diagnoses of 'unipolar' depression - which lacks the 'highs' typical of **bipolar** disorder.

The overall yearly risk of new diagnosis of **mania** and **bipolar** disorder was 1.1 per cent during the study time.

Researchers determined that the peak age for diagnoses in the patients was between 26 and 35 - and that the age group carried yearly risks of 1.2 per cent.

Of the group, 35.5 per cent were prescribed SSRIs, 9.4 per cent received mirtazapine, 5.6 per cent were on venlafaxine and 4.7 per cent took tricyclics.

Researchers found those who took **antidepressants** at some point had a higher risks of later being diagnosed with **bipolar** disorder or **mania**.

The yearly risks of people developing the disorders after **antidepressant** treatments increased - ranging from 1.3 per cent to 1.9 per cent.

Additional analysis showed that the heightened risk was most closely associated with SSRIs and venlafazine.

These drugs were linked to a 34 to 35 per cent increased risk of being diagnosed with **bipolar** disorder and/or **mania**.

The findings held true even after researchers had taken account of potentially influential factors.

Researchers weren't able to draw firm conclusions about cause and effect from the observational study.

But they did concede that the association could be tied to latent **bipolar** disorder.

The study said: 'However, regardless of underlying diagnoses or aetiology the association of **antidepressant** therapy with **mania** demonstrated in the present.

'And previous studies highlight the importance of considering whether an individual who presents with depression could be at high risk of future episodes of **mania**.'

Risk factors include a family history of **bipolar** disorder, depressive episodes with psychotic symptoms, young age at first depression diagnosis and depression that doesn't respond to treatment.

The researchers added: 'Our findings also highlight an ongoing need to develop better ways to predict future risk of **mania** in people with no prior history of **bipolar** disorder who present with an episode of depression.'

The study was published in the BMJ.