

About Bipolar Affective Disorder

Bipolar affective disorder, also known as bipolar disorder or manic depression, is a mental illness in which the patient has mood swings or mood cycling. The mood cycles between depression, mania, and normal behaviors. Depression episodes are typically accompanied by extreme sadness and feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, decreased energy, and sleeping too much. Manic episodes are typically accompanied by extreme happiness, inability to sleep, increased energy, racing thoughts, and distractibility. Mixed episodes, in which the patient shows symptoms of both mania and depression at the same time, can also occur.

Bipolar affective disorder is caused by a combination of neurological, biological, emotional, and environmental factors. The true causes of bipolar affective disorder are not fully understood. However, researchers and doctors are continually making advances in this area.

There are two types of bipolar affective disorder. The first type involves an almost constant state of minor mania, with alternating periods of extreme mania and depression. The second type of bipolar affective disorder involves an almost constant state of depression, alternating with small, minor bouts of mania.

Before bipolar affective disorder was fully understood, people with the first type of the illness were often misdiagnosed as schizophrenic. This is due to the fact that many with type one bipolar affective disorder have tendencies to lose touch with reality, have hallucinations, or have delusions during more severe manic phases.

The second type of bipolar affective disorder is often misdiagnosed as clinical depression. This is because the patient is most often depressed, and does not complain about being happy during their manic episodes. The diagnosis is usually corrected after medication treatment has begun for depression. Anti-depressants used with bipolar patients tend to throw the patient into a manic phase. If this happens, the doctor will immediately realize their error and switch the patient to a mood stabilizer.

There are many treatment options for bipolar affective disorder. The most common treatment for bipolar affective disorder is a combination of medication and therapy, or counseling. Medication options include mood stabilizers, anti-depressants, and anti-psychotics. Therapy options include traditional counseling methods, cognitive behavioral therapy, emotive behavioral therapy, and rational behavioral therapy. CBT, EBT, and RBT are fairly new forms of

bipolar affective disorder therapy treatments, that have been found to be extremely successful. Patients who are not candidates for medication can often have successful results with CBT, EBT, or RBT therapy alone.

While bipolar affective disorder is not a new illness, there is still very little known about the subject. As doctors and researchers learn more about the brain and how it functions, the more likely a cure for bipolar affective disorder will be found. In the meantime, people who feel that they may show symptoms of bipolar affective disorder should contact a mental health professional for diagnosis and treatment options. Family or friends who notice these symptoms in others should also seek to help that person find help for their mental illness. Bipolar affective disorder does not have to control your life, if you are willing to undergo treatment to control it.