

What is the Real Cause of Bipolar Disorder?

Everything happens with a cause and that is a fact. It has been stressed in many subjects in school that there is always the so called 'cause and effect'; and one can't happen without the other.

What about bipolar disorder? The illness is considered as the effect; so what then are the causes? Studies are still underway and researchers are still trying to determine the exact cause of bipolar disorder. Scientific evidence claims that the chemical imbalance inside a person's brain has something to do with bipolar disorder. But then again, what causes the chemical imbalance? Viable theories say that it is due to environmental triggers and heredity. Let's deal with these things one at a time.

Chemical Imbalance

Some people believe that the chemical imbalance in a person's brain is caused by dog bites, osmosis and lithium shortage. But that is a misinformation that brings a lot of confusion to the minds of the people. Most scientists believe that psychological and biological explanations may be the cause of the brain's chemical imbalance.

When you talk about biological explanation, the first thing on the list is genetics. Inheritability is a great issue and there is overwhelming evidence that bipolar disorder runs in the family and reflects genetic vulnerability.

Bipolar disorder is said to be caused by neurotransmitter systems. For decades, scientists are already aware that there is a link between mood disorders and neurotransmitters. Low or high levels of serotonin, dopamine or norepinephrine cause bipolar disorder. There are also studies that indicate a change in the nerve cells' receptors and sensitivity.

For now, the neurotransmitters are considered as part of the cause of bipolar disorder but their exact role is not yet established. Research is still being conducted.

Geneticists are trying to determine the chromosomes and genes that act as carriers of bipolar disorder. They would like to find out if these chromosomes or genes come singularly or in tandem. The gene GRK-3 and some chromosomes are

said to be linked with bipolar disorder. But most scientists and geneticists agree that 50% is caused by genetics and the other half is due to the environment.

Continuous studies are still underway. Sophisticated tools are needed to uncover what activates the genes or chromosomes, the brain component's code, and how these things affect human behavior. Once the molecular knowledge is acquired, new therapies may be engineered to make the lives of bipolar sufferers much easier.

Environmental Triggers

Life is full of stressful events, and this is the primary culprit that implicates bipolar disorder manifestation. Stressful events may pertain to job loss, death of a loved one, or anything that is encountered by an individual. There have been studies showing that the events results to the symptoms associated with bipolar disorder. So when bipolar is triggered, it will soon progress and continue.

To sum it all up, some scientists were able to come up with model called Diathesis-Stress. This is a term that refers to a person being susceptible to diseases like bipolar disorder. This model says that every individual inherits physical predispositions that make him/her at risk to possible problems that might be encountered. In order for a disorder to be produced, both the inherited tendency, as well as the stressful conditions is required.

So if you're suffering from bipolar disorder, it's likely that you were able to inherit some genes that make you susceptible to the disorder, and that some events in your life triggered it. Scientists are still studying this disorder and the theories can still be refined.

By expanding and applying the knowledge gained by scientists in their studies, the bipolar patients can be given the right treatment strategies based solidly in science; and not on the trial/error method.

Bipolar disorder typically starts during an individual's late twenties, but there have been cases where teenagers and even children are diagnosed with the disorder. Physicians and patients still find it hard to struggle with the disorder especially if the right treatment combinations are not yet struck.

Living with bipolar disorder is quite difficult, but with the many discoveries yet to be uncovered, the patients and their families can be assured that a bright and normal future awaits them. Therefore, great attention must be given

to the different studies and researches that specialists undertake.