

# Challenges and Treatments of Bipolar Disorder

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## INTRODUCTION

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a chronic mental illness that affects millions of people worldwide. This disorder is characterized by extreme changes in mood, energy, and activity levels. In bipolar disorder, individuals experience episodes of mania and depression that alternate, with periods of stability in between. Bipolar depression, in particular, is a form of depression that occurs in individuals with bipolar disorder during the depressive phase of the illness. In this commentary, we will discuss bipolar depression, its symptoms, and its treatment.

## DESCRIPTION

Symptoms of bipolar depression can vary from person to person, but the most common symptoms include sadness, lack of energy, difficulty sleeping, loss of interest in activities, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, and thoughts of suicide. These symptoms are similar to those of major depressive disorder, which can make it difficult to differentiate between the two disorders. However, there are some key differences that can help diagnose bipolar depression. These include a history of manic or hypomanic episodes, sudden changes in mood or energy levels, and periods of remission or stability between episodes.

Bipolar depression can be particularly challenging to treat. Many of the medications used to treat depression, such as Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), can trigger manic or hypomanic episodes in individuals with bipolar disorder. As a result, medications that are specifically designed to treat bipolar disorder, such as mood stabilizers and antipsychotics, are often used instead. However, finding the right medication or combination of medications can take time and may require several adjustments before a person finds relief from their symptoms.

In addition to medication and psychotherapy, there are several

lifestyle changes that can help manage bipolar depression. These include getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet, avoiding drugs and alcohol, and learning stress-management techniques. Support groups and self-help groups can also be helpful in managing bipolar depression. These groups provide a supportive environment where individuals can share their experiences and learn from others who have been through similar situations.

Despite these treatment options, bipolar depression remains a challenging illness to manage. It is often chronic, and individuals may experience multiple episodes throughout their lifetime. In addition, individuals with bipolar disorder are at a higher risk of suicide than the general population, especially during depressive episodes. Therefore, it is important for individuals with bipolar disorder to receive ongoing treatment and support.

One of the challenges in treating bipolar depression is the lack of understanding and awareness of the disorder. Many people with bipolar disorder go undiagnosed or are misdiagnosed with major depressive disorder, which can delay proper treatment. In addition, there is still a stigma surrounding mental illness, which can make it difficult for individuals to seek help.

To address these challenges, it is important to increase awareness and understanding of bipolar disorder and its symptoms. This can be done through education campaigns, public speaking events, and media outreach. It is also important to promote access to mental health care, including affordable treatment options and support groups. By increasing awareness and access to care, we can help individuals with bipolar depression receive the treatment they need to manage their symptoms and live full and productive lives.

In conclusion, bipolar depression is a challenging illness that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by extreme changes in mood, energy, and activity levels, and can be difficult to treat. Medication, psychotherapy, and lifestyle changes can all be effective in managing bipolar depression.

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