

Association of Sleep with Bipolar Disorder

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INTRODUCTION

According to the various studies, those individuals who suffer from bipolar disorder are found to face sleep issues. For example, a person may sleep 12-14 hours continuously or stay awake whole nights:

Bipolar Disorder, Depression, and Sleep Problems

For bipolar disorder, apart from genetics other risk factor also needs to be considered alongside. These factors may be environmental and behavioral factors including:

Insomnia - Insomnia is not just difficulty in falling asleep, but difficulties staying asleep or very less sleep. Insomnia is common with many physical and mental health conditions. Individuals with bipolar disorder, hypomania and mania often lead to insomnia.

Delayed sleep phase syndrome - It is a circadian rhythm disturbance. It mostly found in adolescents, can be associated with depression and other mental health problems.

Irregular sleep-wake schedule - individuals with bipolar disorder lacks proper sleep routine, this irregular cycle can greatly affect treatment of disorder. Treatment is then focused on treating the cause which keeps an individual up at night.

Nightmares - Vivid dreams, nightmares, and night terrors are also one because that affects the sleep of people with bipolar disorder.

Sleep as a Precipitant of Mania with Bipolar Disorder

A surprising fact is reduced sleep isn't just a symptom of mania—a short night can actually precipitate manic and hypomanic episodes.

According to studies 25 to 65% of people with bipolar disorder who had a manic episode had encountered a social rhythm disruption before the manic episode. "Social rhythm disruption" is some disturbance in daily routine which affects the sleep/wake cycle; for example: one had stayed late to watch a movie or engaged in an interesting online chat session, or due to sudden situation because of family member's serious illness or death.

Could Sleep Disorders Actually Lead to Bipolar Disorder?

Some scientists hypothesize that one of reason for the incidence of bipolar disorder has risen in modern times is because of the development of bright artificial light. In ancient times most people's sleep/wake cycles were regulated by the sun. The artificial light had completely changed it all that and made it more likely that those individuals who have a genetic predisposition toward bipolar disorder would actually develop the condition.

Sleeping issues in people with bipolar disorder have also been associated with changes in the microstructure of the white matter of one's brain.

How to Cope

As it is necessary to address sleep disturbances due to bipolar disorder similarly sleep disturbances which could worsen bipolar disorder also need to be addressed

For Individuals suffering from insomnia, a well-developed sleep is critical. Experts recommend the following for them:

1. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day
2. One must avoid naps, especially naps in the late afternoon. If one requires to nap, then it should be limited to around one hour.
3. heavy meals a few hours before retiring must be avoided

If you are unable to sleep even after a certain amount of time (e.g., 15 min) get up and do something. Even due to sleep disturbance or late sleeping at night, one must wake up next morning at the regular time as it is very important, even if you had less than seven hours of sleep.

In case if an individual is sleeping too much (hypersomnia) it is advisable to gradually reduce the sleeping time by making use of an alarm clock.

Psychotherapy and medications help play important role in improving sleeping habits, and by doing so, bipolar disorder symptoms will gradually improve as well.

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