Bipolar Disorder 5 Essay, Research Paper

Bipolar Disorder

Definition:

Bipolar disorder is a psychological disorder characterised by alteration between states of deep depression and extreme elation.

Incidents:

It is thought that 1% – 1.5% of the population could suffer from bipolar disorder. This effects man and women equally but women are three times more likely to experience rapid cycling. The disorder can effect all age groups. The first symptoms may occur in children or teenagers. Bipolar disorder in children is often misdiagnosed as it is often confused with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Etiology:

Bipolar disorders are caused at lest, in part by biochemical imbalances in the brain. There is also evidence that bipolar disorder often occurs within families.

Terminal illnesses such as AIDS and Huntington s disease may lead to bipolar disorder. The over uses of steroids can also causes bipolar disorder.

Clinical Features:

There are two prominent periods in bipolar disorder, depression and mania.

In the depression period the person mat became very sad, have difficulty getting to sleep but want to sleep most of the time, they may have a loss of appetite and therefore loose weight or they may have an increases in appetite and therefore gain a lot of weight. These people may also experience a loss of energy, fells of guilt and worthlessness or hopeless. “They may pessimistic or hopeless about the future and may think about or attempt suicide.”(Encarta ‘99) during periods of severe depression, some people may experience delusions and/or hallucinations.

During the manic period of bipolar disorder people may have feelings of intense but inappropriate happiness and self-importance. They may become irritable and over energetic causing sleeplessness, racing thoughts and rapid speech. They also have feelings of inflated self esteem and became over confident and have delusions of grandeur. These people became impatient and abrasive, and easily frustrated and physically abusive. Their actions are often socially inappropriate. These people often think irrationally and have impaired judgement, this can lead to self destructive behaviour such as gambling, spending lost of money, using and abusing alcohol and other drugs, and also provoking both physical and verbal fights.

Treatment

Lithium carbonate is the drug of choice used to control both depression and mania in people with bipolar disorder. This drug takes 2-3 weeks to become effective and can cause nausea, increased thirst and urination, dizziness and loss of appetite and muscle weakness. Some anticonvulsant drugs may also help control severe manic periods.

In very severe cases elctroconvulsive therapy (ECT) may be affective when used with drug therapy.

Management and Social Readjustment

People with bipolar disorder are managed with drug therapy both in medical care (hospital) and at home. When these people are feeling well they sometimes stop taking their medications and begin cycling rapidly between depression and mania. This is often the main reason for admission to hospital.

People with bipolar disorder maintained on their drug regimes are able to work and socialize well within their communities. If they stop talking their medication, they withdraw from social activities and they may have problems keeping their jobs. People who have been diagnosed with a mental illness, such as bipolar disorder can become socially isolated because people who do not understand their condition make fun of them and refuse to associate with them.

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