

Bipolar Children?



By:

Table of Contents

What is Child Bipolar?	page 1
Why do Many Kids Have it?	page 1
Medicating	page 2
How to Diagnose Bipolar	page 2
Does it Exist in Kids?	page 2
Safety	page 3
Bibliography	page 4
Pictures, Cartoons, Photos	page 5

What is Child Bipolar?

Most people think bipolar is only found in adults, but recently kids have been diagnosed. Scientists hardly know anything about the bipolar kid's brain. Bipolar is a disorder that makes people have amazingly strong feelings. For example, if you were a kid with bipolar, you might be super-happy and try to convert your entire school to communism. The next day you would be so depressed you could not get out of bed for days. Kids who have bipolar can also have quick changes in weight, sleep and eating habits.

A person who has Bipolar 1 has dramatic mood swings, irritability, distractibility, and long amounts of time being depressed. The second type is Bipolar 2 which is a less extreme version of Bipolar 1 except kids with it are more depressive than super happy and excited. The last kind is called Bipolar NOS and kids who have it do not have very clear symptoms. They might also be easily angered and irritable.

Why do many kids have it?

The amount of kids being diagnosed with bipolar has increased 40 times over the last 10 years. Some people think it is because doctors are better at diagnosing it and can notice very minor cases. Other people think it is because parents think their child has it when they don't. A child could be treated with dangerous bipolar medicines for

years, then find they never had it.

Medicating

Many people believe kids are being over-medicated in the U.S. In 2005, 2,200,000 American kids were being treated for emotional or behavioral issues. Sometimes a medicine just stops working and the child's doctor has to give them more. A kid might be given 4 or 5 medicines, then be given more to stop the serious side effects of the first medicine. A bipolar child could end up with about 10 medications.

Scientists don't know if a kid can get over bipolar and not have it as an adult. All they they know is that the medications help the children in school and help them have less wild emotions. The drugs are tested on adults because they don't want to put kids in harm. The problem is that the medications do different things to kids than adults. For example, some drugs work well on adults but are too strong on kids.

How to Diagnose Bipolar

The only way to diagnose bipolar right now is for a doctor to talk to the child and watch how they behave. Many scientists are trying to come up with a more efficient way to diagnose people. Scientists are arguing over what the most important symptoms are in childhood bipolar. One scientist noticed that the blood flow in a bipolar child's brain is different than a normal kid's.

Does it Exist in Kids?

There is no science behind bipolar, except that the kids act differently. If you were an adult that acted like a kid by having temper tantrums, you would be considered bipolar. Doctor Stanley Turecki, author of "The Difficult Child," says, "we are suffering from the shrinking tolerance for the broad limits of normality." This means that many personalities are normal, but we keep telling people on the outer edges of normality that they are not normal. On the other hand, Judith Warener, author of "We've Got Issues" used to believe kids were being over-medicated. But when she went in search of kids who were over-medicated she could not find any. She only found kids who really did have big problems.

Safety

Many people know their kid is different but they don't know if they should go as far as to call it a mental illness and to give their kid dangerous medicine. For example, Rebecca Riley of Massachusetts mysteriously died overnight. The 4-year-old had been diagnosed with bipolar and was taking many anti-depressants. The drugs had not been tested on kids.

I believe in the next 50 years scientists will figure out if bipolar disorder exists in kids, or not. If it does exist in kids, I think scientists will discover a more efficient drug that is not dangerous.

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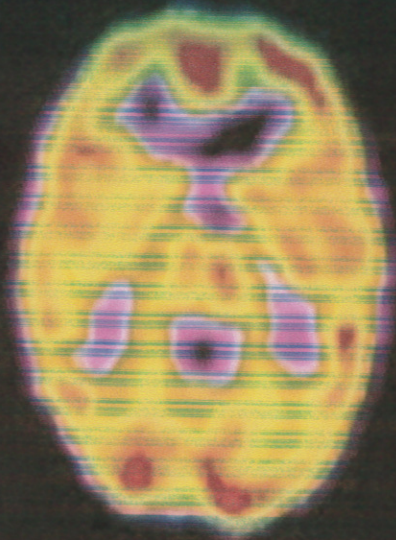
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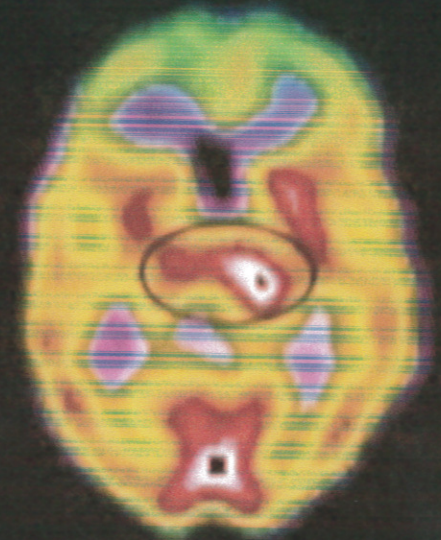
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Bipolar Spectrum

This picture is of two child brains. One is a bipolar brain and the other is a normal child brain. The different colors stand for the blood flow in the child's brain.

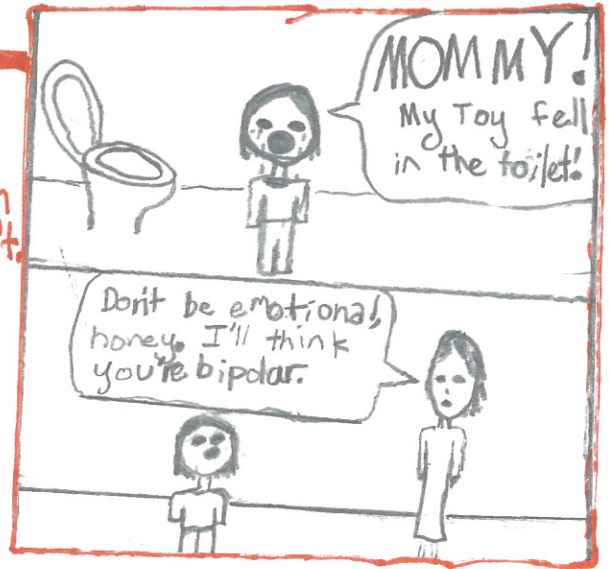


Normal



Patient

Some people think there are so many kids with bipolar because their parents think they have it when they don't.



Rebecca Riley of Massachusetts had bipolar and was taking a handful of drugs. She mysteriously died overnight.