

Bipolar Disorder Among Children

Overall Prevalence

- Bipolar Disorder usually starts in late adolescence or early adulthood, but children can have bipolar disorder too.
- Community studies estimate lifetime prevalence of bipolar spectrum disorders to be 0% to 3% among adolescents, depending on the assessment measure and the range of the spectrum considered (e.g., Bipolar II, cyclothymia). Prevalence of child-onset bipolar is not well established due to debate about the appropriate definition of caseness (or boundaries of diagnosis) among preadolescents.

Treatment and Related Information

- Approaches to treatment for children and adolescents with bipolar is similar to that for adults, with medication as the first line of treatment.
- Children respond to medications in different ways, so the type of medication depends on the child. Some children may need more than one type of medication because their symptoms are complex. Different kinds of psychotherapy can also help children with bipolar disorder.
- There is a scarcity of data on evidence-based pharmacological or psychotherapeutic treatment for pediatric Bipolar Disorder.
- Children and adolescents with Bipolar Disorder most commonly have other psychiatric disorders. These may include attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and anxiety disorders.
- Bipolar Disorder can run in families.