

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NEW GUIDELINES ON TREATING BIPOLAR DISORDER**

New evidence-based guidelines on the treatment and management of bipolar disorder have been published by the British Association of Psychopharmacology. The guidelines are intended to assist physicians in their clinical decisions, as well as offering a source of information to other health professionals, patients and carers.

Published in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology* (June 2009 vol 23/4), the guidelines were the product of a review undertaken by a consensus committee led by Guy Goodwin, professor of psychiatry, University of Oxford. The committee updated the previous guidelines last published in 2003 and the revised guidelines cover:

- Diagnosis
- Clinical management
- Strategies for the use of medicines in the treatment of episodes
- Relapse prevention
- Stopping treatment

Although the guidelines necessarily tend to target 'average' patients, they also take into account the special needs of treating children, women of childbearing age, and the elderly.

Bipolar disorder has grown from its origins as one of the twin functional psychoses with schizophrenia to a broader concept which includes the many patients who seek treatment for depression but also experience mood elevation. This bipolar spectrum imposes a significant burden on healthcare systems with as many as four or five in 100 people being diagnosed with the condition.

Sometimes also known as manic depression, bipolar disorder has a complex expression as unstable mood with more or less frequent episodes of mood elevation or depression. It is caused and shaped by a combination of genetic and environmental influences. It carries with it a range of co-morbidities which include

anxiety disorders, substance misuse and impulse control disorders. Premature mortality is explained by an increased risk of vascular disease and suicide.

Commenting on the new guidelines, Professor Goodwin said, "The revised guidelines review the changes in diagnostic practice and the controversial extension of the diagnosis to younger age groups. In relation to treatment, there is further emphasis on the depressed phase of the disorder and the role of psychological interventions in keeping patients well."

'Evidence-based guidelines on treating bipolar disorder' is available from [http://www.bap.org.uk/pdfs/Bipolar\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.bap.org.uk/pdfs/Bipolar_guidelines.pdf)

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**Note to Editors**

Evidence-based guidelines on treating bipolar disorder: revised second edition – from the British Association of Psychopharmacology  
*British Journal of Psychopharmacology* June 2009 vol 23/4  
<http://jop.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/23/4/346>

The British Association for Psychopharmacology, founded in 1974, brings together those from clinical and experimental disciplines and the pharmaceutical industry to advance education and research in psychopharmacology: the study of the action of drugs on mood and behaviour [www.bap.org.uk](http://www.bap.org.uk)