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(Academic Poster)***



Bipolar Disorder

A Journey Through History, Treatment and Equality



(Two Heads Back-to-Back BestMind, 2022)

Introduction

- ▶ Chronic mood disorder with mania/hypomania and depression (Grande et al., 2016).
- ▶ Affects mood, energy, behaviour, functioning (NIMH, 2025).
- ▶ Types: Bipolar I, Bipolar II, cyclothymia (Hickman, 2024).
- ▶ Impacts relationships, work, physical health (Bonnín et al., 2019).
- ▶ Early signs: mood shifts, sleep disruption (BestMind, 2022).
- ▶ Aim: analyse history, treatment, stigma, inequality and policy.

Historical Understanding & Treatment

- ▶ Kraepelin defines manic depressive insanity (López-Muñoz et al., 2018).
- ▶ Asylum era: institutionalisation, stigma, poor care (Scull, 2015).
- ▶ Early 20th Century: ECT used widely, often without consent (López-Muñoz et al., 2018).
- ▶ 1950s: Lithium reduces hospitalisation (López-Muñoz et al., 2018).
- ▶ 1960s - 80s: Move to community care, but underfunded (Scull, 2015).
- ▶ Past care marked by coercion and limited patient rights (Scull, 2015).

Modern Therapeutic and Care Deliver

- ▶ Medication: lithium first line (NICE, 2023).
- ▶ Antipsychotics for mania.
- ▶ Anticonvulsants for mood stabilisation.
- ▶ Antidepressants used cautiously.
- ▶ Therapy: psychoeducation, CBT, family focused work (Yatham et al., 2018).
- ▶ Planning for crises: systems for early warning (NICE, 2023).
- ▶ Services: CMHTs, crisis teams, inpatient care (NHS England, 2020).
- ▶ Physical health checks due to medication effects (Forty et al., 2014).

Stigma & Inequality

- ▶ Stereotypes: dangerous, unpredictable, unstable (MHF, 2021).
- ▶ Self-stigma reduces adherence and willingness to seek help (Thorncroft et al., 2016).
- ▶ Families experience emotional burden (Latifian et al., 2023).
- ▶ Workplace discrimination (MHF, 2021).
- ▶ Cultural stigma delays diagnosis (Barnett et al., 2019).
- ▶ Racial disparities in detention/treatment (Barnett et al., 2019).
- ▶ Men more often sectioned and women misdiagnosed (Barnett et al., 2019).
- ▶ Unequal access to therapy despite NICE (NHS England, 2020).

Evaluation

- NICE guidance inconsistently applied.
- Therapy access limited by resources (NHS England, 2020).
- Postcode inequality in crisis and specialist care (NHS England, 2020).
- Long waits lead to medication being used too often (NICE, 2023).
- Minority groups face higher coercion.
- ICD-11 clearer but culturally limited (WHO, 2024a; WHO, 2024b).
- Underfunded CMHTs increase relapse (NHS England, 2020).
- Service users feel excluded from care planning (Lawn et al., 2021).



Recommendations

- Expand access to NICE recommended therapies.
- Increase funding for early intervention & community care.
- Improve cultural competence.
- Strengthen coproduced care planning (Lawn et al., 2021).
- Reduce coercive practices.
- Bipolar specific anti stigma campaigns (MHF, 2021).
- Better integration of mental & physical health services.



Illustration of a man with eyes closed and hands on his knees, practising a calming technique (DBSA, 2026).

Conclusion

- Care has progressed from institutions to evidence based community support.
- Stigma, inequality, and service gaps persist.
- Future care must be person centred, culturally sensitive, rights based.

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