



BIPOLAR DISORDERS Factsheet

May 2020

What is treatment-resistant bipolar disorder?

Medications provide symptom respite and improvement in quality of life for many people with bipolar disorder. However, for some, medications do not provide adequate relief from symptoms. A broad definition of treatment resistance includes those patients whose symptoms have not responded adequately to medications, or only partially responded after four or more weeks of treatment with appropriate doses.

What is the evidence for treatment-resistant bipolar disorder?

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests non-response to antipsychotic medications in people with bipolar disorder in an acute mania phase is around 41%, and non-remission is around 65%.

Early non-response in week one and two of treatment significantly predicted non-response and non-remission in week three, regardless of antipsychotic characteristics.



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about bipolar disorder or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

For more information see the technical table

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