



# Diagnosis

## Somatic symptom disorder

Image: ©shidlovski - stock.adobe.com

### BIPOLAR DISORDERS Factsheet

October 2021

#### What are somatic symptoms?

Somatic symptoms are defined as medically unexplained bodily sensations or basic physical dysfunctions (for example, appetite, digestion, or sleep) that an individual perceives as worrisome or unpleasant. They may be localised to a particular bodily region, or generalised, as in the case of excessive fatigue or loss of energy. Symptoms are not intentionally produced or feigned.

For a diagnosis of a somatic symptom disorder, the extent to which a person's feelings, thoughts, and behaviours about their somatic symptoms must be distressing, excessive or disproportionate, and persist for more than six months.

#### What is the evidence for somatic symptoms in people with bipolar disorder?

Moderate quality evidence suggests a small increase in the rate of somatic symptoms in people with bipolar disorder than in the general population or in people with other psychiatric disorders, apart from people with depression who show similar rates of somatic symptoms.



**NeuRA**  
Discover. Conquer. Cure.

*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

#### HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at [neura.edu.au](http://neura.edu.au).