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BIPOLAR DISORDERS Factsheet

December 2021

What are minor physical anomalies?

Minor physical anomalies (MPAs) are subtle anatomical deviations which have little functional or aesthetic impact. MPAs in people with bipolar disorder are highly variable, but may include high palate, low-seated ears, cuspidal ear (ears with angled ridges instead of a round curve at the top of the opening into the ear canal), strabismus (cross-eyes), hypertelorism (increased distance between the eyes) and adherent, or attached ear lobes. They may be traced to events occurring prenatally and may represent risk markers for underlying illness susceptibility. MPAs may be important risk indicators when an individual is already at high risk of developing a mental disorder and when multiple MPAs occur together in one individual.

What is the evidence for minor physical anomalies in people with bipolar disorder?

Moderate quality evidence finds more minor physical anomalies in the head and facial region of people with bipolar disorder compared to controls, with no differences in peripheral regions.

For more information see the technical table



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.

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.