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BIPOLAR DISORDERS Factsheet

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How is obesity related to bipolar disorder?

Obesity is defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health. A crude population measure of obesity is the body mass index (BMI), which is a person's weight divided by the square of his or her height. A person with a BMI of 30 or more using metric measures is generally considered obese. Being obese is a major risk factor for diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

People with a severe mental illness are at increased risk of obesity, which may be due to genetic and/or socio-economic factors, lifestyle choices, and metabolic effects of many psychotropic medications.

What is the evidence for obesity in people with bipolar disorder?

Moderate quality evidence suggests a small, significant increase in the rate of obesity in people with bipolar disorder compared to people without bipolar disorder. Moderate to low quality evidence suggests obesity in people with bipolar disorder is associated with poorer symptoms and functioning.

Weight loss in people with bipolar disorder and people without bipolar disorder is similar to the general population following bariatric surgery, with no differences in psychiatric symptoms.

For more information see the technical table



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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.

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.