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BIPOLAR DISORDERS Factsheet

October 2021

How is parental age related to bipolar disorder?

There have been claims that advanced parental age may be a risk factor for the development of mental disorders in the offspring. Commonly offered explanations have been the occurrence of germline mutations in older adults and/or psychological factors such as earlier than normal parental death experienced at a vulnerable age. Pinpointing the age at which parenthood may be associated with a significantly higher risk of bipolar disorder could be useful knowledge for potential parents, particularly if there is a pre-existing increased genetic risk of developing the disorder.

What is the evidence on parental age as a risk factor for bipolar disorder?

High quality evidence finds a small increase in the odds of bipolar disorder in people whose father was aged over 40 years at their birth.

Moderate to low quality evidence finds a significant, medium-sized increase in the odds of affective psychosis (including bipolar disorder) in people whose mother was over 34 years at their birth.

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.

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