

Bipolar Awareness Day 2014 (Tues 7 October 2014)

Press release

Embargoed to 00.01hrs on Tuesday 7 October 2014

Major Bipolar Survey Launched

A major survey is being launched on Bipolar Awareness Day 2014. The survey gives individuals, families, clinicians and other professionals the opportunity to influence research into the causes, diagnosis, treatment and care of bipolar.

The survey has been developed by the James Lind Alliance Bipolar Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) with partners including charities, research funders, clinicians and service users.

Dr Sophie Petit-Zeman, Director of Patient Involvement at the National Institute for Health Research Oxford Biomedical Research Centre, which is co-funding the study, is a member of the PSP Steering Group. She says: 'This is a great example of collaboration across universities, hospitals, charities, and patients. It is often the case that the research agenda is determined by the drug industry or researchers, rather than being informed by patients and those who care for them. It will provide vitally important information to direct research in the years ahead.'

More than a million people in the UK have bipolar, in which periods of depressed mood and periods of elevated ('high') or irritable mood may alternate, causing great distress and with often devastating consequences.

Thousands of people in the UK are currently being assessed for bipolar, and the average length of time to reach the correct diagnosis is ten and a half years. Bipolar impacts men and women across all ages and all ethnicities, but it is still largely misunderstood and its impact can be devastating. Bipolar increases the risk of suicide by up to 20 times.

The survey will be open until late November and can be accessed at www.ouh.nhs.uk/bipolar. The results of the survey are planned for release in July 2015.

Currently, mental health makes up just 6% of the total spent on medical research annually, despite accounting for 23% of the disease burden in the UK. Experts believe only a fraction of this funding is invested into research on bipolar disorder.

Notes for editors

For interviews and further information, please contact Sandra Regan James Lind Alliance Project Manager, NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre, Tel 01865 223298, e-mail Sandra.regan@ouh.nhs.uk (preferred). Alternative contact: Oxford University Hospitals Trust Media Office, 01865 231471

1. The Bipolar Priority Setting Partnership is led by a Steering Group whose members include charities, research funders, clinicians and service users, with funding from Oxford NIHR Biomedical Research Centre and Leeds and

York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. A full list of members and partners can be seen at www.ouh.nhs.uk/bipolar.

2. More than a million individuals have bipolar in the UK (2% of the population).
3. On average, it takes 10.5 years to get a correct diagnosis of bipolar in the UK and before bipolar is diagnosed there is a misdiagnosis an average of 3.5 times.
4. Bipolar increases the risk of suicide by up to 20 times.
5. The World Health Organisation identifies bipolar as one of the top causes of lost years of life and health in 15 to 44 year olds.
6. Mental health accounts for 23% of the UK's disease burden, but only receives 6% of total medical research funding.