



**sonoma county**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

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# Mood Swings

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# Mood Swing: Definition

- A popular, not DSM-5, term
- Rapid variation between mood states (not necessarily extremes)
- Occurs within a brief period of time
- Disproportionate to circumstances
- Causes impairment in functioning
- Common, nonspecific symptom of a variety of disorders

# Mood Swing: Patient Descriptions

- “flipping out”
- “angry outburst”
- “getting mad”
- “losing control”
- “bipolar”

# Mood Swing: Features

- Frequency of symptoms per week
- Intensity of mood symptoms
- Number of mood cycles per day
- Duration of symptoms per day

Kowatch et al., Curr Psychiat 2011;10:39

# Mood Swing: Associated Conditions

**Table 1**

**Clinical characteristics of psychiatric disorders that often feature mood swings**

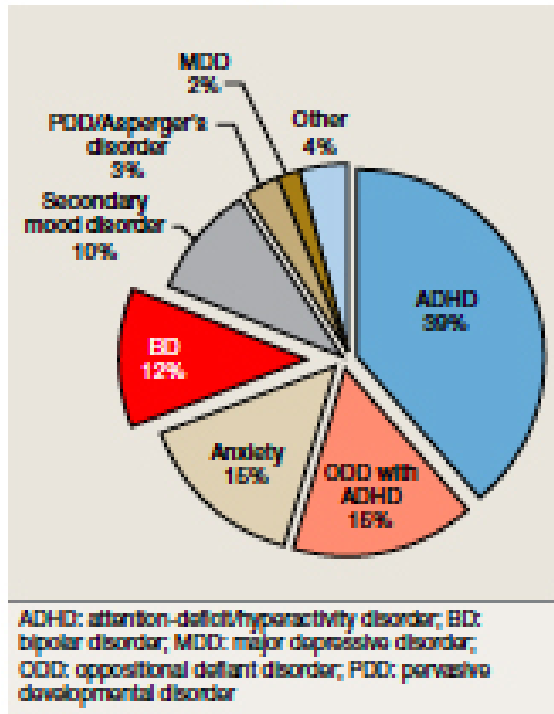
Disorder	Clinical description	Useful tools/resources
ADHD	Chronic symptoms of hyperactivity, distractibility, impulsivity, poor attentional skills, disorganization	Conners' Parent Rating Scale-Revised: Long Form (CPRS-RL)
ODD	Chronic symptoms of oppositionality, negativity; short, frequent mood swings in response to being asked to do something they do not want to do	CPRS-RL
Anxiety disorders	Excessive 'worry,' difficulty with transitions, increased mood swings during stressful periods, psychosomatic symptoms	Self-Report for Childhood Anxiety Related Disorders
ARND	History of exposure to alcohol in-utero; mild dysmorphia, attentional, mood, and executive functioning problems	National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
Bipolar disorder	In children: clustering together of episodes or 'mini-episodes' (several days) of increased energy, decreased need for sleep, increased mood cycling, pressured speech, etc. In adolescents: depressive episodes with episodes of hypomania or mania	Mood Disorders Questionnaire Kiddie Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia Mania Rating Scale
ADHD: attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; ARND: alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder; ODD: oppositional defiant disorder Source: Reference 4		

Kowatch et al., Curr Psychiat 2011;10:39

# Mood Swing: Causes in Children

Figure 1

Underlying diagnoses of 100 children/adolescents referred for 'mood swings'



# Anxiety Disorders in Children & Adolescents

- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  - ✓ counting, checking, cleaning
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
  - ✓ the worrier, “What if?”
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
  - ✓ newly unwilling to sleep alone
  - ✓ angry and refusing to go to school
- Panic Disorder
  - ✓ discrete attacks of severe anxiety
- Social Phobia
  - ✓ refusal to speak in class or go to school

# Mood Swing: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS): problems with learning, memory, attention span, communication, vision, or hearing.
- Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND): intellectual disabilities and problems with behavior and learning
- Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD): affect heart, kidneys, bones or hearing.



# Mood Swing: Causes in Adults

- Normal
- 

- Bipolar disorder
- Major depressive disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Hormonal fluctuations (perimenstrual, peripartum, perimenopausal)
- Alcohol and drug use

# Bipolar I Disorder (DSM-5)

- DEFINITION: At least one manic episode
- Manic episode criteria
  - A. Abnormal and persistently elevated, expansive or irritable mood and increased activity or energy x 1 wk
  - B. Three or four of: inflated self-esteem or grandiosity, decreased sleep, increased talkativeness, flight of ideas, distractibility, increased activity or psychomotor agitation, potentially harmful (eg, financial or sexual) activities
  - C. Impaired functioning
  - D. No other cause

# Bipolar II Disorder (DSM-5)

- DEFINITION: At least one major depressive + one hypomanic episode
- Major depressive episode criteria (*one of \* required*)
  - A. At least five of: depressed mood\*, loss of interest or pleasure\*, weight or appetite loss or gain, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, fatigue or loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, impaired concentration, recurrent negative thoughts; x 2 wks
  - B. Impaired functioning
  - C. No other cause

Continued —>

# Bipolar II Disorder (DSM-5)

## ■ Hypomanic episode criteria

- A. Abnormal and persistently elevated, expansive or irritable mood and increased activity or energy x 4 d
- B. Three or four of: inflated self-esteem or grandiosity, decreased sleep, increased talkativeness, flight of ideas, distractibility, increased activity or psychomotor agitation, potentially harmful activities
- C. Change in functioning
- D. Observable by others
- E. No severe social or occupational impairment, hospitalization or psychotic features
- F. No other cause

# Rapid Cycling in Bipolar Disorder

- DEFINITION: Four or more discrete mood episodes (mania, hypomania, depression, mixed) over 1 year
- Prevalence = 10-20% of bipolar patients
- Associated with longer illness duration, greater severity and worse global functioning
- May be associated with increased suicide risk
- More common in women
- Associated with bipolar II disorder and hypothyroidism
- Lithium, anticonvulsant mood stabilizers and atypical antipsychotics may be effective
- Antidepressants may destabilize

Fountoulakis et al, Bipolar Disord 2013;15:115

# Treatment of Acute Bipolar Disorder

Table. Treatments for bipolar disorder: number (N), mean dose, likelihood to help or harm (LHH), number needed to harm (NNH), and number needed to treat (NNT).

Treatment Drug	Acute Mania					Acute Bipolar Depression						
	N	Dose (mg/d)	LHH (r:s)	NNH (s)	NNT (r)	N	Dose (mg/d)	LHH (r:s)	NNH (s)	LHH (r:w)	NNH (w)	NNT (r)
<b>Mood stabilizers</b>												
Lithium	134	1950	6.8	27	4	136	981	1.3	20	-7.5	-112	15
Divalproex, divalproex ER	261	2778	1.0	7	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Carbamazepine ER	223	694	1.5	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lamotrigine	—	—	—	—	—	541	100-400	3.5	42	-2.8	-34	12
<b>Second generation antipsychotics</b>												
Olanzapine	124	16	1.0	5	5	351	9.7	0.6	7	0.5	6	12
Risperidone	273	4.9	1.3	5	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Quetiapine, quetiapine XR	209	400-800	1.5	9	6	1166	300-600	1.0	6	3.2	19	6
Ziprasidone	268	121	0.7	5	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Aripiprazole	260	28	1.8	9	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Asenapine	372	18	1.4	11	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paliperidone ER	195	9	3.4	17	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Combination</b>												
Olanzapine + fluoxetine	—	—	—	—	—	82	7.4 + 39.3	3.0	12	1.5	6	4

ER = extended-release formulation; r = response; s = sedation; w = weight gain; XR = extended-release formulation.

LHHs, NNHs, and NNTs are compared with placebo.

See text for references to studies.

\*Potential LHH and NNH advantages of lithium for acute mania and of lamotrigine for acute bipolar depression.