

Bipolar disorder and
schizophrenia
comparison
psychology essay



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Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive disorder and schizophrenia are both mental disorders. Bipolar disorder describes a category of mood disorders that work to elevate moods in a person in an abnormal manner. Schizophrenia, on the other hand, works to provide abnormalities in a person's perception and/or expression of reality. Both these disorders affect a person's personality and patients of these disorders have to receive special medical care, which includes but is not limited to medication. The most important aspect of care in these situations includes care from physicians and nursing. In many cases, a full time nurse can become necessary and important for patient care. In this paper, I will make further comparisons between the two disorders.

The etiology of both bipolar disorder as well as schizophrenia has been found to be very similar to each other with both posting both genetic as well as environmental stimuli as the main contributing factors. Various causes are known to be responsible for bipolar disorder and research has shown that they vary between individuals. Even though most of the studies conducted on bipolar disorder are limited in their scope because of their small sample sizes, there is reason to believe that most cases are due to genetic contribution (Edvardsen et al, 2008; Kato, 2007). Other studies have shown that significant environmental influences can also trigger bipolar disorder. Genetic studies of individuals with bipolar disorder have suggested that certain chromosomal regions and candidate genes appear to be common in the patients. However, many of these studies remain unsubstantiated because researchers have been unable to replicate the results and findings. On the other hand, it has also been suggested that people's life events and

experiences can play a big part in the development of bipolar disorder. It has also been suggested that genetic problems coupled with environmental factors, e. g. death of loved ones, can cause a person to develop bipolar disorder.

Similar to the causes of bipolar disorder, it has also been suggested that both genetic as well environmental influences acting together are the main cause of schizophrenia. However, there is strong evidence to support that cases of schizophrenia have significant heritable components (Owen et al, 2005; Craddock et al, 2006). Just like bipolar disorder, it has been noted that people who have a genetic tendency towards schizophrenia tend to lapse into episodes of the mental disease through certain environmental inputs in their lives, such as death, sorrow, and/or depression. Thus, it has been deemed that the etiology of schizophrenia is “ biopsychosocial,” which means that biological, psychological, as well as social factors are all contributors as causes for schizophrenia.

Both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder can have overlapping signs and symptoms; however, the main symptoms for each are extremely different from each other. For instance, the most common symptoms of schizophrenia include auditory hallucinations, delusions, and having disorganized thought and speech. Schizophrenics have exhibited loss of their train of thought with sentences that have been found to be only loosely connected in meaning and/or syntax. In some extreme cases, it has been found that schizophrenics also talk complete nonsense and babble. Other signs and symptoms include loss of social skills, paranoia, and catatonia. These symptoms are usually considered to be specific to schizophrenia only, however, certain symptoms, <https://assignbuster.com/bipolar-disorder-and-schizophrenia-comparison-psychology-essay/>

such as depression and isolation, have been found to be common in patients of both schizophrenia as well as bipolar disorder.

Symptoms that are specific to bipolar disorder include elevated levels of happiness that are countered by equally elevated levels of depression. These states become problematic when they interfere with the normal functioning of the person. It can sometimes be very difficult to diagnose bipolar disorder because of the varied types of symptoms that occur in different people. However, the most common symptom of bipolar disorder is extreme depression that comes and goes and is sometimes replaced with feelings of extreme joy. Other symptoms can include feelings of anxiety, guilt, hopelessness, fatigue, loss of appetite and loss of interest in social interaction.

Treatment for both these ailments can be either in the form of medication or through care giving, as in nursing care. Medication in both the disorders have been found to be a controversial aspect of treatment, as they seem to cause some negative side effects, even though they are able to suppress the prevailing symptoms. Nursing care has been found to be of utmost importance in both bipolar disorder as well as schizophrenia. Nurses caring for patients of bipolar disorder work to suppress the core symptoms as well as reduce the negative expressed emotion in relationships. They also work to recognize episode triggers and prodromal symptoms that flare up to the full-blown episodes. In case of schizophrenic patients, nurses tend to provide cognitive behavioral therapy for the patients. In both cases, however, nursing care has to be given on a regular and full time basis. This means that the nurses have to be vigilante and hard working and have to be there for <https://assignbuster.com/bipolar-disorder-and-schizophrenia-comparison-psychology-essay/>

the patients at all times. Of course, nurses would have to work in shifts for such an arrangement. The most important aspect of such a therapy and treatment is that the patient feels that the therapy is part of his or her life. This is why it is important for the nurses to provide a comfortable and accessible environment for the patients of both bipolar disorder as well as schizophrenia.

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