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The Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder: A Review and Clinical Guide for Psychologists and Other Mental Health Clinicians

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Abstract

The diagnosis of bipolar disorder remains a significant challenge in mental health care. This review and clinical guide outlines clues from the family and patient history, behavioral/mood profiles and response to intervention, which raise the index of suspicion for a bipolar syndrome in older adolescents and adults. The symptomatic overlap and differentiating features of bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder are also reviewed. This article concludes with a discussion of the roles played by informants, rating scale screening and empirical medication trials in helping to establish a more reliable diagnosis of bipolar disorder.