

Mood Disorders: Symptoms and Diagnosis

Unipolar, Bipolar Depression and Seasonal Affective Disorder

UNIPOLAR DEPRESSION

- People suffering from unipolar depression are usually aware of their mood change and will either spontaneously recover or voluntarily seek help.
- Categorised as neurosis.

Symptoms of Unipolar Depression

- **Cognition**
 - Memory and concentration affected
 - Think negatively
 - Think about committed suicide
 - Persistent worrying
- **Emotion**
 - Sadness and despair
 - Absence feeling, describe themselves as 'empty'
 - No interest in everyday activities
 - Excessive guilt
- **Behavioural**
 - Stop socialising
 - Lose interest in sex
 - May attempt suicide
 - Activities take longer to complete
 - Stop taking care of themselves
- **Physical**
 - Aches and pains
 - Lack of energy
 - Palpitation (shiver)
 - Headaches
 - Stomach upsets
 - Loss of weight and appetite

Diagnosis of Unipolar Depression

The person must have 1 of the following symptoms out of the 4 stated above:

- Depressed mood
- Loss of interest and pleasure

- Symptoms must last at least 2 weeks.

BIPOLAR DEPRESSION

- A mood swing from a very low, depressed state to mania. When their depression lifts they enter a period of extreme joy known as mania.
- During the manic phase the person may lose touch with reality and the illness is categorised as a psychosis.

Symptoms of Bipolar Depression

- **Cognitive**
 - Severely disrupted
 - Delusional ideas - 'Grandiose delusion'
 - Paranoid - people trying to kill them` - 'Persecutory delusion'
 - May hear voice inside head
 - Visual hallucinations
 - Irrational decisions
- **Emotion**
 - Will feel marvellous - deny anything is wrong with them
 - Lack of guilt
 - Increased pleasure in activities
 - Loss of social inhibitions (shyness)
- **Behavioural**
 - Increase in work, sexual activity and social activity
 - More talkative and speak faster
 - Reckless with negative consequences
- **Physical**
 - Sleep very little
 - Increase in energy levels

Diagnosis of Bipolar Depression

The person must involve a distinct period of abnormally and persistently elevated mood lasting at least 2 weeks, plus at least 3 additional symptoms of those above.

Patients may be unaware that there is anything wrong with them during the manic phase.

Seasonally Affective Disorder

- Type of depression occurring in the winter months.
- Onset usually 18-30 years old
- It can be either unipolar or bipolar

Unipolar SAD - Will end in spring with return to normal functioning

Bipolar SAD - Sufferer enters a manic phase when winter ends. The condition is usually diagnosed when the person has had three or more consecutive winter of symptoms

Biological Explanation - The pineal gland in the brain secretes a hormone called melatonin when it begins to get dark outside. The hormone acts to make us feel drowsy and ready for sleep.

Experiment: TERMAN (1988)

Aim - Tried to find evidence that reduction in daylight hours contributed to SAD

Method - He compared the incidence of depression in two parts of America where daylight hours were different

Results - 10% suffered from SAD in New Hampshire where winter days were short and 2% suffered from SAD in Florida, more daylight during winter.

Conclusion - The difference in daylight hours was a contributory factor in the onset of seasonally affective disorder