Bipolar Patients' Current Thoughts and Actions Predict Their Future Attitudes

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By examining the current mental state of people with bipolar disorder, it's possible to tell which way their moods will swing in the future, according to a study published in Psychological Assessment, the journal of the American Psychological Association.

For the study, scientists followed 50 people with bipolar disorder during a one-month period. Researchers found that the participants' thoughts and behavior at the start of the study could be used to predict their mood at the end of the study.

"Individuals who believed extreme things about their moods-for example that their moods were completely beyond their control or that they had to remain active to prevent becoming failures-developed more mood problems in a month's time," said lead author Warren Mansell, PhD, of the School of Psychological Sciences in Manchester, England.

In contrast, people with bipolar disorder who viewed their moods as normal reactions to stress, or knew they could manage their mood, fared well a month later.

These findings support talking treatments, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). These therapies help patients discuss their moods and change the way they think about mood swings, Mansell said.

The study authors hope this information will lead to more effective therapies for bipolar disorder.

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