

Health Bulletin

Understanding Bipolar Disorder

(NAPSA)—Bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, affects between three and 12 million Americans, but few realize that they have the illness. A survey by the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) shows that people with bipolar disorder see more than four different doctors and struggle with symptoms for an average of ten years before finally getting help.



Discussing symptoms with a doctor can help people with bipolar disorder get treatment.

People with bipolar disorder often seek treatment during the depressive phase of the illness but are less likely to consult a health-care professional during a manic episode, increasing the difficulty for physicians in diagnosing the disorder.

To help people with bipolar disorder seek help, the DBSA recently launched www.bipolarawareness.com, a patient education center housed on WebMD. The site features information on bipolar disorder, as well as links to advocacy and support groups. The Web site also offers a symptom checklist and a screening tool that lets people assess whether they may have bipolar disorder. Visitors can print their screening results as well as a list of important questions they should ask their doctors. The Web site is supported by an unrestricted grant from Eli Lilly and Company.