

Children of bipolar parents more creative

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Stanford University School of Medicine scientists have shown for the first time that children of bipolar parents score high on creativity indices.

Researchers said a sample of children who either have or are at high risk for bipolar disorder, which was formerly called manic-depressive illness, score higher on a creativity index than so healthy children.

"I think it's fascinating," said Dr. Kiki Chang, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and co-author of the paper. "There is a reason that many people who have bipolar disorder become very successful, and these findings address the positive aspects of having this illness."

Dr. Terence Ketter, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and a study co-author, published a 2002 study showing healthy artists were more similar in personality to individuals with bipolar disorder -- the majority of whom were on medication -- than to healthy people in the general population.

Ketter said he believes bipolar patients' creativity stems from their mobilizing energy that results from negative emotion to initiate some sort of solution to their problems. "In this case, discontent is the mother of invention," he said.

The study appears in the November issue of the Journal of Psychiatric Research.

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