



Chronic Condition Coding Awareness: **Bipolar Disorder**

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks¹. People who have bipolar disorder can have periods in which they feel overly happy and energized and other periods of feeling very sad, hopeless, and sluggish. In between those periods, they usually feel “normal”. One can think of the highs and the lows as two “poles” of mood, which is why it’s called “bipolar” disorder.²

Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder

People with bipolar disorder experience periods of unusually intense emotion, changes in sleep patterns and activity levels, and unusual behaviors. These distinct periods are called “mood episodes¹.” A clinician would have to determine whether they may be the result of another cause (such as low thyroid, or mood symptoms caused by drug or alcohol abuse).²

Treatment of Bipolar Disorder

Medication is the main treatment, usually involving “mood stabilizers”. Psychotherapy, or “talk therapy,” is often recommended, too.²

Bipolar Coding Guidance

TIPS:	ICD-10 Mapping & Education
➤ ICD-10-CM	F31.0 – F31.9 (Bipolar disorder) ³
➤ Attempt for more specificity...	Avoid broad terms and unspecified codes such as “Bipolar disorder”, F31.9, or “Bipolar II disorder”, F31.81 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be meticulous in picking up the details in documentation. ○ It leads to precise coding and a better awareness about the disease and the population it affects.
➤ In the documentation use terms that specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type I or II ○ Current or in remission ○ Manic or mixed ○ Severity (mild, moderate, severe) ○ Presence of psychotic features
➤ Bipolar previously diagnosed? Consider the following...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two similar conditions cannot occur together, e.g. reporting Depression when Bipolar has been addressed. ○ Depression is considered inclusive of Bipolar disorder, per ICD-10-CM “Excludes 1” note.
➤ Refilling medication	Don’t forget to verify the condition and list the diagnosis in the Assessment & Plan.

1. National Institute of Mental Health: Bipolar Disorder (revised April 2016) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>
2. WebMD: A Look at Bipolar Disorder (reviewed November 2015) <http://www.webmd.com/bipolar-disorder/mental-health-bipolar-disorder#1>
3. 2017 ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians: The Complete Official Code Set, Optum360. 2016 Optum360, LLC