

Evidence-based treatment options for Bipolar Disorder

Guidance for Psychiatrists, Family Physicians,
and Nurse Practitioners



Developed by:

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According to the Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) and International Society for Bipolar Disorders (ISBD) 2018 guidelines for the management of patients with bipolar disorder, the following psychological and pharmacological approaches could be beneficial for individuals with Bipolar Disorders:

A. Psychological treatment:

Psychoeducation (PE) is considered to be the first-line recommended treatment for bipolar disorder. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and Family-focused therapy (FFT) are considered to be second-line psychological therapies. Interpersonal and social rhythm therapy (IPSRT) and Peer Support are considered to be third-line psychological therapy options.

B. Pharmacological treatment:

First-line recommended medications for the treatment of bipolar disorder include

Lithium, quetiapine, divalproex, lamotrigine, asenapine and aripiprazole are considered to be first-line treatments for maintenance treatment and bipolar disorder. These medications help prevent both mania/hypomania and depressive symptoms.

Second-line recommended medications for the treatment of bipolar disorder include:

Olanzapine, risperidone, carbamazepine, paliperidone, lurasidone and ziprasidone are considered to be second-line treatments recommended for maintenance treatment and bipolar disorder.