

Investigating the Risk Factors and Causes of Bipolar Disorder among Young Adults in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to inspect the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder amongst young adults 20-30 in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 19,880 (20-30) of the aged in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra state. The sample for the study was 180 selected using purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a 15- item questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach statistics which yielded reliability coefficient value of 0.87 for the three clusters. This was considered high enough to confirm the instrument as reliable. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data collected. The findings of the study revealed the risk factors, causes, management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorder in young adults in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra. The implications of the study were highlighted and it was recommended that the state government should organize health awareness programmes and also support and care should be provided to caregivers and families of those with bipolar disorder. Additionally, suggestions for further studies were made.

Keywords: Investigate, Bipolar disorder, risk factors

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The most common mental health disorders are; anxiety disorders, depression, delusion, phobia, manic disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, substance abuse disorders, personality disorder and bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder (BD), previously known as manic-depressive disorder, is a relatively common mental illness, characterised by recurrent episodes of mania (or hypomania) and major depression, and associated with a significant burden of morbidity and premature mortality (Lane & Smith, 2023). According to Lane & Smith (2023), the disease is characterised by an individual spiralling into a state of melancholy, which can last up to a few months and is known as a depressive episode. The typical presentation of these episodes of depression includes low energy levels, hypersomnia, cognitive impairments, decreased sexual desire, carbohydrate craving, and weight gain. Suicide attempts are extremely common during such an episode and individuals have confessed to being in a very dark space with no other way to escape. Conversely, Bipolar Disorder also has a stage of exhilaration and excitement, which can be classified as a manic episode. Diagnostic criteria for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) include psychological and

physical symptoms, such as low mood and changes in appetite or sleep, respectively (Ghanbarirad *et al.*, 2021).

Risk factors that contribute to BD include the use of Cannabis (otherwise called Indian hemp), one to four times per week, during the third trimester of pregnancy, as well as smoking during pregnancy, which may affect the foetus. In addition, such risk factors may also include the use of Cocaine, the use of opioids, tranquilisers, stimulants and sedatives during pregnancy, and regular substance abuse during a period of a year. Parental loss before the age of five, war trauma and stress, as well as traumatic head injury may influence the condition. Factors that may worsen the condition in a diagnosed individual may include the use of alcohol, opioids, tranquilisers, stimulants and sedatives. Anxiety disorders, socio-economic problems, child abuse and sexual maltreatment may also worsen the condition, (Kendler *et al.*, 2024). arise from the interplay between a person's biological or genetic vulnerability (the diathesis) and environmental stressors or triggers (the stress). Applying the theory in connection to the topic shows that, the risk of developing a mental disorder is not solely determined by genetic or environmental factors alone, but rather by the interaction between the two. A person with a genetic vulnerability to a particular disorder may not develop the disorder unless they are exposed to certain environmental stressors, such as trauma, abuse, or significant life changes.

Similarly, a person without a genetic vulnerability to a disorder may develop the disorder if they are exposed to significant amounts of stress over time. This diathesis interacts with environmental stressors such as life events or chronic stress to trigger the onset or exacerbation of the disorder.

Statement of the Problem.

There are so many mental health problems that are affecting young adults. According to National Council of Health (2023), 26 percent of young adults have at least one mental health disorder and 40 percent have at least two. Anorexia Nervosa (AN), Anxiety disorders, and substance abuse among the most common and costly chronic mental conditions causing two-thirds of deaths each year (Chen *et al.*, 2019).

WHO (2022) reports common mental health problems of young adults as follows: Anxiety disorders, depression, delusion, phobia, manic disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, substance abuse disorders and personality disorder. In a study conducted by Chakraborty and Sandel (1985) on mental health problem among young adults of 18-30 years at rural area of Calcutta. The result reveals that, main mental health related problems were (28.8%) Anxiety disorders, (20.8%) mood disorders, and (14.6%) substance use disorders. As people grow, they are more likely to experience several mental health conditions at the same time.

The young adult in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State in particular also face some mental health challenges mostly Anxiety disorders, substance abuse disorders, personality disorder, schizophrenia etc. These problems place young adults in a state in which they are not able to function normally. However, economic situation of the country complicates the situation of young adults as they are not being given the desired attention by both the Government and their respective families. Also in time past, less attention has been given in terms of studies to find the mental health challenges faced by young adults and how to tackle them in Anambra State. Thus we may ask what the health challenges faced by young adults in Awka South Local Government Area. The study therefore is undertaken to determine the risk factor and causes of bipolar disorder as a mental health problems faced by young adults in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Questions.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the risk factors of bipolar disorder amongst young adults in Awka South Local Government Area?
2. What are the causes of bipolar disorder amongst young adults in Awka South Local Government Area?
3. What are the management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorder amongst young adults in Awka South Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference on the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder amongst young adults in Awka South Local Government Area.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design and it was conducted in Awka South Local Government Area, one of the 21 local government councils in Anambra State. According to the National Census report of 2006, Awka South L.G.A. has a population of 148,465, consisting of 16,158 males and 72,307 females.

The population for the study consists of 19,880 young adults in Awka South Local Government Area as reported by the estimated population statistics of Awka South (2022). The sample size for this study was 180 respondents. Purposive sampling technique was used. Since there are 9 towns in Awka South LGA, the sample size of 180 was divided into 9 towns which is 20. Therefore, the actual sample of young adults to be selected from each town in Awka south LGA was 20.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Investigating the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder in adults aged 20-30 in Awka south”.

The instrument was divided into four sections. The first section was the demographic profile of the respondents that shows the age of the young adults. The second section ascertained the risk factors of bipolar disorder. The third section ascertained the causes of bipolar disorder. The final section ascertained the management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorders. The questionnaire items were scaled on percentage of yes (2) and No (1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity.

The reliability of the instrument was tested and analyzed using Kuder-Richardson, KR20. The internal consistency of the items was determined (0.87). The reliability coefficient value of 0.87 for the study was considered highly reliable for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained was analysed using percentage. Decision Rule: Any item that obtains 50% and above would be regarded as a high percentage response, while items that scored less than 50% would be regarded as low percentage response.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Question 1: What are the risk factors of bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state?

Table 1: Percentage analysis of the risk factors of bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state.

N=180

	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	Remark
1. Have you ever been diagnosed of bipolar disorder?	3	0.3	VL	177	99.7	VH
2. Have you ever struggled with substance abuse or addiction?	3	0.3	VL	177	99.7	VH
3. Have you notice any patterns of mood swings or extreme shift in energy levels?	36	16.0	VL	144	84.0	VH
4. Have you experienced traumatic events such as physical or emotional abuse, that may contribute to the risk factors of bipolar disorder?	144	84.0	VH	36	16.0	VL
5. Do you have a history of suicide attempt or self-harm behaviours?	12	5.3	VL	168	94.7	VH

Analysis in Table 1 shows that the respondents has high percentage in questionnaire items 1, 2, 3 and 5 in “NO” side (99.7%,99.7%, 84.0% & 94.7% respectively), showing that adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state have little or no knowledge of the risk factors of bipolar disorder. However, the respondents have experienced traumatic events such as physical or emotional abuse that may contribute to the risk factors of bipolar disorder (84.0%).

Research Question 2: What are the causes of bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state?

Table 2: Percentage analysis of the causes of bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state.

N=180

	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	Remark
6. Do you believe that significant stressful situation can cause bipolar disorder?	168	93.8	VH	14	6.2	VL
7. Do you believe that there are genetic factors that can contribute to the development of bipolar disorder?	36	16.9	VL	144	83.1	VH
8. Do you believe that substance abuse or addiction can cause bipolar disorder?	14	6.2	VL	168	93.8	VH
9. Do you believe that experiencing a traumatic event in life (e.g. abuse, neglect, and accident) may increase risk of developing bipolar disorder?	171	95.1	VH	9	0.9	VL
10. Do you believe environmental factors such toxins and pollutants can cause bipolar disorder?	170	95.0	VH	10	4.0	VL

Analysis in Table 2 shows that adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state have high percentage in question 6 and 10 on “Yes” side (93.8% & 95.0% respectively), showing that they believe that significant stressful situation can cause bipolar disorder. However, the respondents believe that experiencing

a traumatic event in life (e.g. abuse, neglect, and accident) may increase risk of developing bipolar disorder (95.1%).

Research Question 3: What are the management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state?

Table 3: Percentage analysis of the management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state.

N = 180

	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	Remark
11. Do you know that lifestyle changes such as improving sleep patterns, maintaining balance diet can help support your mental health?	177	99.7	VH	3	0.3	VL
12. Do you know that the avoidance of alcohol and recreational drugs are known to exacerbate the symptoms of bipolar disorder?	6	3.6	VL	174	96.4	VH
13. Do you know that engaging in stress reducing activities such as mindfulness, medication and relaxation of the mind can help in the proper management of your mental health towards bipolar disorder?	15	6.7	VL	165	93.3	VH
14. Do you know that recognition of early triggers of mood episodes and appropriate action taken can prevent escalation of bipolar disorder?	20	8.9	VL	160	91.1	VH
15. Do you know that active participating in therapy session or support groups can help you learn effective coping strategies for managing bipolar disorder?	14	6.2	VL	166	93.8	VH

Analysis in Table 3 shows that all the respondents has high percentage in question 12 to 15 (91% to 100%) in “NO” side. This showed that there is low management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorder among adults in Awka Local government Area of Anambra state. However, the respondents knew that lifestyle changes such as improving sleep patterns, maintaining balance diet can help support your mental health (99.9%).

Test of Hypotheses

There is no significant difference on the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder amongst young adults 20-30 in Awka South Local Government Area.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of the difference on the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder amongst young adults 20-30 in Awka South Local Government Area.

(N=180)

	Yes	No	Cal X ²	Crit X ²	Remark
1. Have you ever been diagnosed of bipolar disorder?	3	177	.18	3.84	NS
2. Have you ever struggled with substance abuse or addiction?	13	167	5.04	3.84	S

3. Have you notice any patterns of mood swings or extreme shift in energy levels?	36	144	10.46	3.84	S
4. Have you experienced traumatic events such as physical oremotional abuse, that may contribute to the risk factors of bipolar disorder?	144	36	4.40	3.84	S
5. Do you have a history of suicide attempt or self-harm behaviours?	12	168	17.94	3.84	S
6. Do you believe that significant stressful situation can cause bipolar disorder?	168	12	8.50	3.84	S
7. Do you believe that there are genetic factors that can contribute to the development of bipolar disorder?	36	144	7.15	3.84	S
8. Do you believe that substance abuse or addiction can cause bipolar disorder?	14	168	10.46	3.84	S
9. Do you believe that experiencing a traumatic event in life (e.g. abuse, neglect, and accident) may increase risk of developing bipolar disorder?	171	9	15.88	3.84	S
10. Do you believe environmental factors such toxins and pollutants can cause bipolar disorder?	170	10	53.44	3.84	S

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the in the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder amongst young adults 20-30 in Awka South as 9 out of the 10 items listed had calculated chi-square values greater than the critical value. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding of this study was that the risk factors include the use of cannabis and smoking during pregnancy. The results of the study revealed the risk factors for bipolar disorder amongst young adult 20-30 in Awka South Local Government Area. The study is in agreement with the findings of Kendler *et al* (2024) that the risk factors that contribute to bipolar disorder include the use of cannabis one to four times per week, influenza during the third trimester of pregnancy, as well as smoking during pregnancy, which may affect the foetus. In addition, such risk factors may also include the use of cocaine, the use of opioids, tranquilisers, stimulants and sedatives during pregnancy, and regular substance used during a period of a year. Parental loss before the age of five, and stress, as well as traumatic head injury may influence the condition.

The second findings of the study discovered that majority of young adults aged 20-30 in Awka South Local Government Area are affected by emotional health problems such as depression, stress and anxiety which can lead to the cause of bipolar disorder. The findings revealed that traumatic life events such as the loss of loved one, emotional and physical abuse are the major causes of bipolar disorder. As opined by Pitchot, Scantamburlo, and Souery (2019). Other causes include the use of substance or addiction to use of substance, genetic factors and environmental factors.

The results of this study revealed that respondent showed high extent on the management and prevention strategies amongst young adults 20-30 in Awka south Local Government Area. The findings seemed to be in line with Orsolini *et al* (2024) who opined that therapy sessions such as support groups can help in effective managing strategies for bipolar disorders. Some of the contributions to the management and prevention strategies to bipolar disorder amongst young adults 20-30 are as follows: avoidance of alcohol and recreational drugs, recognition of early triggers of mood episodes, engaging in stress reducing activities

such as meditation, relaxation, etc and lifestyle changes such as change on sleep patterns.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that environmental factors, including high levels of stress, exposure to trauma, and substance abuse, significantly influence the onset and progression of bipolar disorder in young adults 20-30 in Awka south local Government Area.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Improved understanding of the risk factors and causes of bipolar disorder in young adults can contribute to the early detection and intervention of bipolar disorder. There is therefore need for health education in school curricular, churches and local communities. They also need to be educated on where and how to locate health services and facilities which would be helpful to them as they notice the early triggers of mood episodes in them in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. The state government should look into the mental health of young adults by improving access to integrated mental health services that address both the psychiatric and psychosocial needs of young adults with bipolar
2. The state government should implement routine screening for bipolar disorder among young adults in healthcare settings such as primary care clinics and universities.
3. The government should increase public awareness about bipolar disorder, its symptoms, and available resources for diagnosis, treatment, and support.
4. Finally, support programs and resources should be provided for families and caregivers of young adults with bipolar disorder.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The following are suggestions for further studies:

1. The present study could be replicated in another area , using a larger population and a wider scope.

Comparative study on the causes and risk factors of bipolar disorder amongst young adults 20-30 in Awka South Local Government Area with another local government in another state can be carried out.

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