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IS THERE A BIOLOGICAL BASIS TO THE BIPOLAR SPECTRUM?

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Background: The Bipolar Spectrum is usually presented as a Clinical Spectrum. We attempt to demonstrate that there is a neurobiological basis to this spectrum .

Method: We carried out a review of the literature.

Results: There is evidence, at a neuroimaging level ,at a genetic level, and also at an intracellular level for a biological basis to the bipolar spectrum.

Discussion: What arises from this review is that the bipolar spectrum may be wider than previously thought. It is of interest that similar neuroimaging findings may be found in PTSD , Unipolar Depression, Bipolar Illness, and Borderline Personality Disorder.

Conclusion: The key biological issue regarding the bipolar spectrum is the mechanism by which unipolar depression evolves over time into bipolar illness. At present we can only speculate about this mechanism, but its elucidation will clarify how these illnesses are related in the bipolar spectrum.