

Message from the Board

It was the end of an era at the end of March when the Board cleared out the Bipolar office at the Alford Centre, but at the same time it allowed us to have an impromptu spring clean.

Whilst we are awaiting access to a new office, Bipolar Aberdeen is operating from the office of a Board member to allow a reduced service to be provided.

We also wish to thank Morag for her contribution to Bipolar during her employment with us. Unfortunately, Morag left Bipolar at the end of March.

The Board is looking at new plans for the Bipolar Office when it re-opens and will take into account all of the responses of the questionnaire that many of you have kindly completed and returned. It has given us a lot to think about.

Office News

Bipolar Aberdeen is between offices at the moment, therefore we have to operate a scaled down service. You can still contact us through e-mail (office@bipolar.uk.com) and on the mobile on a Thursday from noon – 4pm, on 07980 978216.

We are sorry for any inconvenience that this causes. We are doing every thing that we can to secure new premises and we will let you know as soon as we can about where we are moving too, and when we are reopening.

In the mean time here are some helpful numbers:-

NHS 24 0845 4 24 24 24

Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87

Samaritans 05457 90 90 90

Bipolar Disorder - Is Your Brain Shrinking?

A new study has found that people with bipolar disorder lose brain tissue as they age more rapidly than do people without mental illnesses. The tissue loss was concentrated in brain areas that control memory, facial recognition and coordination.

Reports on the study don't mention whether the subjects were taking medications, and the lead researcher's comments make no mention of whether medications could have an impact on the results. Also, the study was small - 20 test subjects and 20 in the control group. The researchers found that they all lost some grey matter over

time - but those with bipolar disorder lost more. In addition, the most grey matter was lost in the people who had the most manic/hypomanic and depressive episodes.

The study leader, Dr. Andrew MacIntosh of the University of Edinburgh, said the results don't tell them whether loss of brain tissue is a cause or a result of the bipolar disorder. Commenting on the study, Professor Guy Goodwin of Oxford University said it shows that bipolar disorder really is a brain disease, and "it supports the idea that cognitive function is impaired in bipolar patients in middle age...".

What these results clearly show is that stabilization is important for yet another reason. "No matter which way round it is," said Dr. MacIntosh, "it emphasizes in my mind the importance of maintaining people in remission and the importance of getting them the best treatment."

Nutrient Depletion

Eating poorly for a day or two isn't going to have much effect on overall health. It has been estimated that eating well 80% of the time will cover your nutritional needs.

Usual habits of eating poorly are a different story. The effect of marginal intake over time has a predictable effect on what happens in the cells and to health. This sequence of gradual depletion of nutrients in the body has been called the Stages of Nutritional Injury. Gradual accumulation of excess (excess calories, vitamins, minerals, etc.) may also result in nutritional injury.

The early stage could be called Predisposition. No nutritional depletion has occurred, but genetic inheritance leaves an individual disposed to perhaps needing more of a nutrient than the average person. The "average" healthy person is used in determining the RDA (Recommended Dietary Allowances). An example of medical problems which have inherited qualities include pernicious anemia, or metabolic and mental changes found in untreated phenylketonuria. Bipolar disorder, depression, eating disorders, alcoholism and schizophrenia have also been reported to have genetic factors.

From Psychcentral

News from the Alford centre.

From the 1st of April the Alford Centre will be using community buildings to run its open sessions.

They have secured two community buildings, these are The Phoenix Building (Mondays and Thursdays 12.30-4pm) and Rutherford community Centre (Tuesdays 12.30-4pm).

For more information please Email

alfordcentre@mhaberdeem.org.uk

or have a look at their website www.mhaberdeem.org.uk

Stephen Fry appeals for volunteers to sign up for bipolar DNA study

Host and mental health campaigner Stephen Fry is helping to drum up recruits for research into bipolar disorder. The Kingdom star has taken part in a Cardiff University study, along with troubled singer Kerry Katona.

But researchers urgently need to double the number of 3,000 volunteers who have so far donated DNA samples for analysis.

Stephen, 52, who has struggled coping with the disorder said: "They would help remove stigma, shame and hidden pain."

Research leader Prof Nick Craddock, who advised EastEnders on the plot about bipolar killer Stacey Slater, said more volunteers were needed urgently.

He said: "Improving the lives of those with the illness requires an understanding of its causes and triggers. We need 6,000 volunteers to understand this complex, serious and often fatal illness."

Mirror online

In Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder, Life Is Not Black and White

Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder affect tens of millions of individuals around the world. These disorders have a typical onset in the early twenties and in most cases have a chronic or recurring course. Neither disorder has an objective biological marker than can be used to make diagnoses or to guide treatment.

Findings in Biological Psychiatry, published by Elsevier suggest that electroretinography (ERG), a specialized measure of retinal function might be a useful biomarker of risk for these disorders, and retinal deficits may contribute to the perceptual problems associated with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.