



## **Bipolar Disorders Clinic**

### ***History***

The Bipolar Disorders Clinic was established in 2000. For the past ten years the Clinic has acted as a tertiary referral centre for patients suffering with bipolar disorder.

### ***Who runs the clinic?***

The Clinic is supervised by a group of specialists comprising of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and researchers.

### ***What benefit can you or your doctor receive from you attending the clinic?***

#### **Patient**

- Help confirm their diagnosis
- Better manage their medication or psychological treatment
- Help them return to a productive lifestyle
- Receive an information pack on bipolar disorder, including fact sheets, listings of support services and helpful resources

#### **Physician**

- Review diagnosis
- Provide a comprehensive review of the case
- Directions for better management of the patient

### ***How does the Clinic run?***

The Bipolar Disorders Clinic starts at 9 am and runs until 3 pm. The course of the day is as follows:

1. The patient is greeted by the clinic secretary in the foyer of the building and taken upstairs to the Clinic area.
2. A research officer will then take the patient through to the interview rooms where they will complete the initial assessment that includes a diagnostic interview (this will take approximately 2 hours).
3. The patient will then have a morning tea break.
4. The patient is then interviewed by a consultant psychiatrist for one hour. While the patient has a coffee break, a review meeting will be taking place with the consultant psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and research officers. This confidential meeting is to discuss diagnosis and the most appropriate treatment for the patient, and will take approximately half an hour.
5. The consultant psychiatrist then sees the patient once again to discuss diagnosis and management recommendations.
6. The patient will then have a one hour lunch break.
7. The patient is then met by the research officer again and will be asked to complete a computer based assessment. The patient may then be asked to volunteer a blood sample

to test thyroid function, liver function, kidney function and mood-stabiliser medication levels, and as part of our Genetic Study of Bipolar Disorder. If the patient is willing, another research assistant will meet them later in the day for some neuropsychological testing.

### ***It is important to note that***

- ✚ The Clinic is located within a research and training facility, therefore a trainee psychiatrist or medical student may sit in during the interview as part of their educational experience. It is the patient's right to request that they do not sit in on the interview but we would appreciate agreement to this if possible.
- ✚ The patient will also on the day be invited to participate in research. The patient's decision, whether to participate or not, will not make any difference to the medical care they receive or affect their future relations with the Clinic, the University of New South Wales or any of its associated teaching hospitals.
- ✚ The Clinic is only available to residents of NSW and the ACT.

### ***What we don't do***

- ✚ We do not take over patient management – this remains with the patient's referring doctor. Clinical specialists will write to the referring specialist or GP concerning diagnosis and management strategies.

### ***Is there a fee?***

There is **no fee** to attend the Bipolar Disorders Clinic. No costs to the patients are involved as Clinic psychiatrists accept the Medicare rebate (that is why we need a

medical referral). The patient must bring their Medicare card with them to the appointment.

### ***Making an appointment***

✚ To make an appointment in the Bipolar Disorders Clinic we require a referral letter from your managing doctor (GP or specialist) that includes:

1. Reasons for referral (e.g., diagnostic clarification, management suggestions),
2. Symptoms,
3. Current medication and/or psychological treatment, and effectiveness,
4. Past medication and/or psychological treatment, and effectiveness,
5. Past diagnoses,
6. Relevant medical history,
7. Relevant family medical history,
8. Patient contact details
  - Name
  - Phone Number
  - Address
  - DOB
9. Copies of any relevant correspondence between the patient's managing health professional and other health professionals (e.g., psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, hospital admittance / discharge summaries).



✚ Referrals can be **faxed** or **posted** to the Clinic secretary, who will then call to confirm a time and date for your appointment.

Ph: 02 9382 2991

Fax: 02 9382 8510

Postal Address: c/- Bipolar Disorders Clinic  
Black Dog Institute Building  
Prince of Wales Hospital  
Hospital Road  
RANDWICK NSW 2031

### ***After your visit***

✚ A letter is sent back to the referring doctor (GP or specialist) and any other professional that the patient names as being involved with their management, outlining the results of the assessments and offering recommendations. There will also be a report of results from the neuropsychological testing that will be forwarded to the referring doctor.

✚ The data gathered from the day is stored confidentially and securely.



### ***Important things to remember***

- ✚ An appointment cannot be made until the Clinic secretary has received a referral.
  
- ✚ The Bipolar Disorders Clinic does not take over patient management as this remains with the patient's referring doctor.
  
- ✚ If for any reason the patient is unable to attend their appointment it is very important that they contact the clinic as soon as possible to allow us adequate time to reschedule.
  
- ✚ Family members or close friends are welcome to sit in on the interviews as long as the patient feels comfortable that they do so.