



# Childhood Bipolar Disorder

*Gary Elliott*

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Seminar paper from the year 2010 in the subject Psychology - Clinic and Health Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Atlantic International University, language: English, abstract: Bipolar Disorder, formerly known as manic depressive illness, is an affective disorder that is characterized by periods of mania alternating with periods of depression; these are usually interspersed with relatively long intervals of normal mood. It is interesting to note that this disorder has been shown to be one of the commonest disorders but has only recently been given its own classification, having previously been confused with many other disorders. Prevalence In the 1998 American census it was discovered that 20% of the adult population, some 44.3 million, had a mental-health issue. In addition to this, 20% of the children had also been diagnosed with a behavioural or emotional issue; this equates to between 7.7 and 12.8 million children (Stillman, 2005). Bipolar Disorder is believed to affect around 2.3 million adults in America and a conservative estimate of a million children. In Sue, Sue & Sue (1997) the prevalence of bipolar disorder is placed at around 1% of the adult population while 8-17% have experienced some form of major depressive episode. Bipolar disorder seems to be rare in children but there have been documented cases of children as young as four years old displaying the symptoms (Poznanski, Israel, & Grossman, 1984). It is interesting to note here that Taylor & Abrams (1981) suggest that about a third of all bipolar cases begin during adolescence, adding value to the focus of bipolar disorder in childhood. Papolos & Papolos (2006) add that an estimated third of all children who have been diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD) have been misdiagnosed and are actually suffering from a mood disorder. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry suggest that a third

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