



Cracking the genetic code of bipolar disorder

Federal Health Minister, mental health champions & researchers appealing for 5,000 Aussie volunteers for world's largest genetic bipolar disorder investigation

Today (November 20, 2018), the Federal Health Minister, mental health champions and researchers will issue a joint call for 5,000 adults who have been treated for bipolar disorder to volunteer for the world's largest investigation into the chronic mental illness¹.

Identifying the genes that predispose people to bipolar disorder (which results in strong changes in mood and energy levels) will revolutionise future research into its causes, treatment and prevention¹.

Approximately one in 50 Australians (1.8 per cent) will experience bipolar disorder during their lifetime². The complex disorder which occurs commonly in families, typically results from a combination of genetic and environmental influences². Those living with bipolar disorder also carry a 15 times greater risk of suicide than the general population, accounting for up to 25 per cent of all suicides².

To learn why Australians should volunteer for the *Australian Genetics of Bipolar Disorder Study*, tee up an interview with a mental health champion, study investigator, expert and/or study participant today.

MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS

- Dan Hunt** Former NRL Player, mental health advocate & founder, Mental Health Movement Company, proudly managing bipolar II disorder, **SYDNEY**
- Enrique "TOPO" Rodriguez** Former Wallaby, author & Managing Director, Australian-Argentine Business Council, who has lived with bipolar II disorder since the 80s, **SYDNEY**
- Neil Cole** Award-winning playwright, researcher & former Shadow Attorney-General who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in the early 90s, **MELBOURNE**

AUSTRALIAN GENETICS OF BIPOLAR DISORDER STUDY INVESTIGATORS

- Prof Ian Hickie, AM** Co-Investigator, Australian Genetics of Bipolar Disorder Study & Co-Director for Health & Policy, Brain & Mind Centre, The University of Sydney, **SYDNEY**
- Prof Sarah Medland** Lead Investigator, Australian Genetics of Bipolar Disorder Study & Head of the Psychiatric Genetics Research Group, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, **BRISBANE**
- Prof Nick Martin** Co-Investigator, Australian Genetics of Bipolar Disorder Study & Head of the Genetic Epidemiology Research Group, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, **BRISBANE**

OTHER EXPERTS

- Prof Nick Glozier** Professor of Psychological Medicine Psychiatry, Sydney Brain & Mind Centre, University of Sydney, **SYDNEY**
- A/Prof James Scott** Child & adolescent psychiatrist & clinical researcher, Metro North Mental Health Service, **BRISBANE**
- Prof Vaughan Carr** Professor of Psychiatry & Chair of Schizophrenia Epidemiology, UNSW, & Consultant Psychiatrist, St Vincent's Hospital, **MELBOURNE**
- Prof Michael Berk** Prof. of Psychiatry, Deakin University & Barwon Health & Director, IMPACT Strategic Research Centre, **GEELONG**
- Prof Ken Kirkby** Prof. of Psychiatry, University of Tasmania & Consultant Psychiatrist, Royal Hobart Hospital, **HOBART**
- Dr Natalie Mills** Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, Discipline of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Adelaide, **ADELAIDE**
- Dr Darryl Bassett** Consultant Psychiatrist & Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Western Australia, **PERTH**

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

- Alex, 21** Childcare worker & musician who was diagnosed with bipolar I disorder at just 16 years of age, **SYDNEY**
- Jess, 24** Uni student & sales assistant who has been experiencing symptoms of bipolar disorder since childhood, **SYDNEY**
- Jo, 39** Freelance journalist & mother of two who battled bipolar disorder for 10 years pre-diagnosis, **NEWCASTLE**
- Bek, 46** HR business partner, wife & fitness enthusiast who has been managing bipolar disorder for more than 20 years, **NEWCASTLE**
- Anita, 43** Mother, writer, mental health advocate & veterinarian who has lived with bipolar I disorder for the past 12 years, **BRISBANE**
- David, 57** Father of four & research coordinator who has battled symptoms of bipolar disorder since his teens, **MELBOURNE**
- Kate, 48** Teacher, mother & budding artist who has lived with bipolar disorder symptoms since adolescence, **MELBOURNE**
- Justin, 31** Aquaculture technician, avid camper & four-wheel driver who has lived with bipolar disorder since his late teens, **HOBART**
- Scott, 45** Father, handyman & former SES volunteer who struggled with undiagnosed bipolar disorder for many years, **ADELAIDE**
- Petra, 46** Mother of two & volunteer who has grappled with bipolar disorder symptoms since her teens, **PERTH**
- Tameka, 49** Mother, carer & photography enthusiast who has experienced symptoms of bipolar disorder for most of her life, **PERTH**

MEDIA CONTACTS: *Kirsten Bruce, 0401 717 566; Holly Hamilton, 0434 799 839, VIVA! Communications*

VISION: VNR available via satellite feed @ 9.15am AEST TUES, NOVEMBER 20, 2018 from 7 Network SYDNEY – please record & ask Ch 7 in your capital city to on-pass, if an affiliate

DIGITAL MEDIA KIT: www.geneticsofbipolar.org.au/media

References

1. The Australian Genetics of Bipolar Disorder Study. Available at <http://geneticsofbipolar.org.au> [last accessed November, 2018].
2. Black Dog Institute. Clinical Resources; Bipolar Disorder; What is Bipolar Disorder. Available at: <https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/bipolar-disorder/what-is-bipolar-disorder> [last accessed November, 2018].