VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT FOR STUDY INTO BRAIN BOOSTER FOR BIPOLAR DISORDER

Providing the brain with an energy boost could be a new treatment for bipolar depression.

Researchers at Royal North Shore Hospital are undertaking a world-first trial to study the benefits of adding vitamins and other natural compounds to a patient’s usual treatment of bipolar depression.

It is believed that patients with bipolar depression may have an abnormality in energy metabolism, resulting in interference with normal brain function. There is evidence to suggest that a combined treatment of prescribed medication, and natural vitamins, may improve some of the symptoms of this illness by providing an energy boost to the brain.

Bipolar disorder affects functioning of the brain, causing people to experience extreme high (mania) or low (depression) moods. People with bipolar disorder spend three times longer in the depressive phase than in the manic phase, and existing treatments often do not lead to full recovery.

Scientists at the CADE Clinic at Royal North Shore Hospital are trialing a treatment that involves a compound called N-acetyl cysteine (NAC), in combination with other potentially energy-boosting nutraceutical agents, including vitamins, minerals and amino acids.

NAC has traditionally been used as a treatment for an overdose of paracetamol. It has also previously been found to be beneficial for people with schizophrenia and partially effective for people with clinical depression. NAC is thought to reduce the effect of underlying physical brain changes that occur in bipolar depression.

You are eligible to volunteer for the study if you are over 18 years of age, have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder and are currently experiencing symptoms of depression.

You will continue your usual treatment during the study, which only requires you to attend seven interviews over the course of the 20-week study. At each visit, a researcher will discuss your symptoms and overall experiences while on the study.

If you would like to take part or find out more about the research, contact Ms Claire McAulay on 9462 9902 or at nacstudy@cadeclinic.com, or http://www.cadeclinic.com/content/cadeclinic/current-research/index.php?#bipolardep

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