

Newsletter  
February 2007

# Mood Disorders Support Group of the Niagara Region

[www.MoodDisordersNiagara.com](http://www.MoodDisordersNiagara.com)



*Our Meeting Place:  
The Centennial Public Library (Downtown)*

## upcoming meetings

- Thursday, February 22, 2007**  
*Pharmacist: Sean Simpson*
- Thursday, March 22, 2007**  
*Open Discussion*
- Thursday, April 26, 2007**  
*Signs and Symptoms: Deborah Wilson*
- Thursday, May 24, 2007**  
*Open Discussion*
- Thursday, June 28, 2007**  
*Psychiatrist: TBA*

## where

Centennial Public Library (Downtown)  
Mills Room  
54 Church Street, St. Catharines  
7:00 pm

## Is There a Pharmacist in the House??

Not a meeting goes by without a question or two (or ten) about the various medications used in the treatment of depression and bipolar disorder. Psychopharmacology is very complex not only for patients but for family doctors as well – that's why we're bringing in a Pharmacist to help us sort the whole matter out.

### Contact Information

**Mood Disorders  
Support Group  
Of Niagara Region**

**(905) 687-6897**  
*(for taped message  
describing upcoming meeting)*

PO Box 29056  
125 Carlton St  
St. Catharines, ON  
L2R 7P9

### NEXT MEETING

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2007**

**7:00 p.m.**

**PHARMACIST SEAN SIMPSON**

*Seroquel*

*Valproate*

**RISPEREDONE**

**LiTHiUm**

**LiTHiUm**

**LiTHiUm**



*Mood Disorders Clinic,  
St. Joseph's Healthcare  
(Hamilton)*

# Research Studies Recruiting Volunteers

The Mood Disorders Clinic at St. Joseph's Healthcare (Hamilton) is currently recruiting participants for the following study:

## First Episode Project

### Who can participate?

Individuals between 16 and 50 years old who are experiencing a first episode of depression or mania OR have had previous episodes of depression or mania but have never received treatment.

### What is involved?

All participants in the project have an initial assessment that lasts approximately 5 hours, broken down into two parts:

- i) The first hour is spent with the psychiatrist who will make a complete assessment of the symptoms and history. If the person is eligible for the study then,
- ii) The participant meets with the clinical research nurse who provides more information and reviews the consent forms for participation.

Once the consent is given, blood tests are taken and the participant then completes some further assessments, questionnaires and memory testing.

If medications are required, they are begun after the blood work and testing. Eventually each participant will have an MRI scan done.

Once enrolled in the study, participants will have weekly assessments for approximately 8 weeks, although this may vary with illness severity. When symptoms are improved, brief monthly assessments will be conducted to monitor illness recurrence.

Once the participant has been well for two weeks, the questionnaires are completed again. A repeat of the initial interview/assessments will be conducted annually.

### To participate:

Talk to your family doctor for referral to the contact below:

Helen Begin, RN  
Clinical Research Coordinator, Mood Disorders Program  
905-522-1155 ext 5426

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*"I've volunteered in a few research studies and like the fact that I'm involved in leading edge research for myself and for others."*

*Jennifer  
Board Member*

## Postpartum Mood Disorder Study

The Women's Health Concerns Clinic is beginning a new treatment study.

- Did you just have a baby?
- Do you find that you are not as happy as you thought you would be?
- Do you experience: moodiness, irritability, decreased interest or pleasure, appetite changes, poor energy, poor concentration, feelings of guilt, or worthlessness?

For more information please contact:

Women's Health Concerns Clinic, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton,  
(905) 522-1155 ext. 5050

# Children and Bipolar Disorder

**Q: If bipolar disorder sets in during adolescence or childhood, does it mean that it will be more severe later in life than bipolar disorder that appears for the first time in adulthood?**

A: When bipolar disorder appears early in life, such as childhood or early adolescence, there is usually a greater biologic predisposition to the illness. The untreated course of a bipolar illness appearing in childhood or early adolescence is subject to the mood swings and hormonal changes of puberty and adolescence. However, if the bipolar disorder is treated effectively, and the disorder is brought under good control, the prognosis can be excellent. So much of the prognosis depends on adequate treatment early in the course, and adequate compliance with the entire treatment program.

In summary, bipolar disorder appearing early in life that is correctly treated, could have a far better prognosis than later onset bipolar disorder which is not adequately treated, or for which compliance is poor.

*Dr. Joe Nieder, Pediatric Psychiatrist  
MDSG New York City*

**Q. What are the educational needs of a child with bipolar disorder?**

A diagnosis of bipolar disorder means the child has a significant health impairment (such as diabetes, epilepsy, or leukemia) that requires ongoing medical management. The child needs and is entitled to accommodations in school to benefit from his or her education. Bipolar disorder and the medications used to treat it can affect a child's school attendance, alertness and concentration, sensitivity to light, noise and stress, motivation, and energy available for learning. The child's functioning can vary greatly at different times throughout the day, season, and school year.

Examples of accommodations helpful to children and adolescents with bipolar disorder include:

- Small class size (with children of similar intelligence) or self-contained classroom with other emotionally fragile (not "behaviour disorder") children for part or all of the day
- Reduced homework, deadlines extended when energy is low
- Late start to school day if fatigued in morning
- Designation of a "safe place" at school where child can retreat when overwhelmed
- Designation of a staff member to whom the child can go as needed
- Extended time on tests, use of calculator for math
- Extra set of books at home
- Regular sessions with a social worker or school psychologist
- Social skills groups and peer support groups
- Enriched art, music, or other areas of particular strength
- Curriculum that engages creativity and reduces boredom (for highly creative children)
- Tutoring during extended absences
- Goals set each week with rewards for achievement



## Emergency Phone Numbers

**Community Crisis Centre  
(Regional)**  
(905) 684-7271 ext. 43230

**Distress Centre**  
(905) 688-3711

**Mental Health Service  
Information Ontario**  
1-866-531-2600

*Source: Child & Adolescent Bipolar Foundation (2007)*

## Are you S.A.D.?

Surveys estimate that 4-6% of the general population experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Are you one of them?

Typical onset is in early winter with improvement in spring or early summer.

### What are common symptoms of S.A.D.?

- Increased sleep, appetite and weight gain
- Irritability
- Interpersonal difficulties (especially feelings of rejection)
- Withdrawal from social contacts

### What is light therapy?

Light therapy involves exposure to bright light under specific conditions. The light can be delivered through several forms; special lamps or a light visor. Daily treatment sessions usually last from 15 to 30 minutes.

### Is light therapy effective?

Light therapy has been found to have an anti-depressant effect in 70% of people with S.A.D. Most people find relief of their symptoms within two weeks of beginning light therapy.

People should avoid self-diagnosis. There may be existing medical conditions that interfere with light treatment. Consult with your doctor if you suffer from eye problems or if you are taking medication with photosensitivity listed as a side effect.

*Source: Mood Disorders Ontario*

### Light Therapy Products available at:

#### Shopper's Home Health Care

145 Carlton St. (Lake Carlton Plaza)  
St. Catharines, ON  
PH: 905-641-5200  
www.shoppersdrugmart.ca

#### Lewis & Krall

325 Thorold Rd West  
Welland, ON  
PH: 905-732-4456

413 Linwell Rd (Ina Grafton site)  
St. Catharines, ON  
PH: 905-938-5138

Toll Free: 1-800-563-6482  
www.lewisandkrall.com

## Save Paper!

*Switch to reading your newsletter electronically!*

The Mood Disorders Newsletter is now available online at <http://www.mooddisordersniagara.com>.

We are still mailing out a number of paper newsletters to those who have signed up at past meetings. However, if you would like to switch to the electronic form of the newsletter, please let us know! We're always happy to save paper!

Our newsletter is located in the **Publications** section of our website. You will need Adobe Acrobat to view the files.

To remove yourself from the paper mailing list, please send an email to [mdsgniagaraweb@yahoo.ca](mailto:mdsgniagaraweb@yahoo.ca).

Please notify us in advance of your move. It is expensive to have the Post Office return newsletters. Use the handy form below to notify us of your new address.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROV: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**MOVING?**