

Researchers develop online support for people with bipolar disorder

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Bipolar disorder. Credit: Lancaster University

An online relapse prevention tool for Bipolar Disorder offers a "cheap

accessible option" for people seeking support following treatment, say researchers.

Bipolar Disorder (BD) is a lifelong mental health condition characterised by depression and mania. It affects one per cent of adults worldwide and costs an estimated £5.2 billion annually in England alone.

It is treated with medication, yet many people continue to experience relapses.

Enhanced Relapse Prevention (ERPonline) is a psychological approach developed by the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research.

It teaches people with Bipolar Disorder (BD) to recognise and respond to early warning signs of [relapse](#).

Lead researcher Professor Fiona Lobban from the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research at Lancaster University said: "The key elements are identifying your individual triggers and early warning signs for both mania and depression, and developing coping strategies to manage [mood changes](#) in everyday life."

The research into ERPonline is published in the [*Journal of Medical Internet Research*](#).

It involved 96 people split into two groups at random—half could access the ERPonline [intervention](#), while the other half received their usual treatment.

The researchers found that access to [ERPonline](#) was associated with an improvement in beliefs about mood plus increased monitoring of early warning signs of depression and mania compared with patients who did not use the intervention.

Professor Lobban said: "Online interventions may prove an important cheap, feasible and acceptable step forward in creating a choice of evidence-based interventions for people with BD at different stages of recovery."

Provided by Lancaster University

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