Evolutionary anthropological hypotheses of bipolar disorder

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Evolutionary anthropological approaches based on ultimate causation principle are resolving the inter-disciplinary conflicts between different fields of study for human mind. Evolutionary anthropology is the multidisciplinary field of social and natural sciences about the physiology and behavior of Homo sapiens and the relationship between human and other hominoids like primates or ancient human species. These evolutionary approaches are useful for attempting to understand why mood disorders have been evolved in spite of harmful effects on individual level. The conditions labeled as disorders may simply be extreme forms of naturally occurring human psychological traits. Some psychiatrists and anthropologists regard depressive and elated mood as one of adaptive social strategy of Hominin. There is evidence of some genetic basis to bipolar disorder, and some patients and their close relatives seem to possess good creativity, high energy, uniqueness, intuition and high performance. For clinicians, it is not uncommon to see bipolar patients who show high creativity and excellent performance in the field of art and literature.

This anthropological and evolutionary perspective could open the new way to discover the true meaning of bipolar disorder. We would like to summarize the previous and recent hypotheses about evolution of bipolar disorder. And we compare the pros and cons of several competing evolutionary explanations of bipolar disorder.

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