**Early Onset of Parental Bipolar Disorder Significantly Increases Risk in Child**

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NEW YORK -- November 1, 2016 -- Children of parents with bipolar disorder appear only at an increased risk for the disorder themselves if onset in the parents was early, according to a study presented here at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP).

"Our results provide support for a strong and independent familial aggregation of bipolar disorder from major depressive disorder and suggest the heterogeneity of bipolar disorder according to the age of onset," wrote Martin Preisig, MD, Lausanne University Hospital, Prilly, Switzerland, and colleagues in their presentation.

For the study, the researchers evaluated 150 offspring, aged 6 to 17, of parents with bipolar disorder, 122 offspring of parents with major depressive disorder (MDD), and 114 offspring of medical control subjects.

The children and their parents were interviewed every 3 years, with a mean follow up of 10.6 years.

The results showed that children of parents who had early onset bipolar disorder had nearly an 8-times greater risk of developing bipolar disorder compared with control subjects. However, when parental onset of bipolar disorder was over the age of 21, there was no increased risk of the disorder in the child, nor was there an increased risk if the parent had MDD.

Children with bipolar disorder whose parents did not have early onset bipolar disorder did show a greater risk of having comorbidities, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) compared with children of parents who had early onset bipolar disorder.

Mood, manic or hypomanic episodes, but not depressive episodes, in youth were shown to predict similar episodes in adulthood.

The findings underscore the unique risk factors to offspring based on the age of onset of the disorder in the parent, the authors noted.

"Offspring with bipolar disorder revealed different comorbidity patterns in function of the age of onset of the parental bipolar disorder," the authors wrote. "In addition, our data showed mood episodes in childhood and adolescence to predict clinically relevant disorders in adulthood. Moreover, they typically remain stable over time, with regard to the polarity of the disorder."

[Presentation title: The Determinants of the Onset and Course of Early Mood Disorders: a Controlled 10-Year Follow-Up Study of Offspring of Parents With Bipolar and Unipolar Mood Disorders. Abstract 2.5]