Press Release

**Bipolar disorder symptoms can be effectively managed with certain lifestyle changes**

*About 10 to 20 million people in India are affected by this condition*

**New Delhi, 11 October 2017:** As per a recently published study, patients with bipolar depression treated with adjunctive bright white light showed a significantly higher remission rate as compared with the placebo light group. This corresponds to 68.2% vs 22.2%, respectively, at weeks 4 to 6 and significantly lower depression scores at the end of the study period. In India, about 10 to 20 million people suffer from mental disorders, one of them being bipolar disorders.

Bipolar disorder is a condition associated with episodes of mood swings ranging from depressive lows to manic highs. The cycles of mood swings can often last for days, weeks, or months, with the changes being so intense that they interfere with a person’s ability to function properly. The condition not only affects daily activities of life, but also the person’s relationship with others.

Speaking about this, **Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement** said, “A depressed person feels sad or hopeless and loses interest or pleasure in most activities. When this mood shifts to mania or hypomania, the person can be euphoric, full of energy, unusually irritable or aggressive. These mood swings can affect the person overall in terms of their sleep, energy, activity, judgment, behavior, and the ability to think clearly. Such mood swings may occur rarely or multiple times a year. While most people experience some emotional symptoms between episodes, some may not experience any at all. While the exact cause of bipolar disorder is not known, it could be due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors and altered brain structure and chemistry.”

A person with bipolar disorder may also experience at least three of the following: grandiose ideas or pumped-up self-esteem; far less need for sleep than normal; an urgent desire to talk; racing thoughts and distractibility; increased activity that may be directed to accomplishing a goal or expressed as agitation; and a pleasure-seeking urge that might get funneled into sexual sprees, overspending, or a variety of schemes, often with disastrous consequences.
Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “Bipolar disorder can become worse, if left untreated. However, a good treatment plan including psychotherapy, medications, a healthy lifestyle, a regular schedule, and early identification of symptoms can help people live well even with this condition. There are also certain complementary health approaches like aerobic exercises and meditation, which can support treatment in such people.”

Here are some tips for self-management of symptoms in those with bipolar disorder.

- Avoid stress as this is a major trigger. Relieve stress through techniques like yoga and meditation. Talk to your family or friends, if this can help relieve stress.
- Stick to a regular schedule as this can help control mood swings to a great extent. People with bipolar disorder are usually affected by too many changes. Have meals, do errands, exercise, and go to bed about the same time every day.
- Studies show that regular exercise can help improve mood. Start slowly with walking and get physical activity every day in some form or the other.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and drugs. Caffeine is a stimulant and can exacerbate manic episodes by keeping you awake. Alcohol and drugs can affect how your medications work.
- Keep a journal in which you make a note of the triggers and schedule. This will help you establish a pattern and prepare yourself accordingly. It will also help your doctor evolve a treatment plan suited to your needs.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

For further information please contact:
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
mediaimahq@gmail.com
IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell