

## Lithium comeback: The use of the ‘penicillin of psychiatry’ to treat bipolar disorder is resurging

A quick literature search for lithium [therapy](#) reveals a multitude of recent articles on its superior efficacy in the treatment of [mood disorder](#)—and its underutilization in favor of other, newer agents ....

Now, a [new paper](#) published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry concludes that “in practice, lithium should be prescribed to all [emphasis added] patients with bipolar disorder, unless there is a specific reason why an alternative is preferable or is better suited” (Malhi et al., 2020).

...

A frequent concern raised about lithium therapy is the risk of side effects, including lithium toxicity, which occurs when lithium is dosed too high or is taken in overdose. However, ... lithium’s side effects are often overestimated by prescribers, and the drug’s long-term safety at appropriate doses has been well-established. Years of anti-lithium [advertising](#) by the pharmaceutical companies has contributed to these negative perceptions surrounding lithium treatment.

Fortunately, there now appears to be broad consensus in academic psychiatry that lithium, long-recognized as the single most effective mood-stabilizing agent, is underused—and that this represents a major problem in bipolar disorder treatment. Psychiatry’s “orphan drug,” long unsupported by any major pharmaceutical company, may be making a comeback.

[Read the original post](#)