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A daily news briefing on psychiatry and mental health, prepared exclusively for members of the APA
Customized Briefing for Dr Ross J Baldessarini

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Small study indicates tamoxifen may help control mania in patients with bipolar disorder.

[Bloomberg](#) (3/4, Lopatto) reports that the "generic breast cancer drug" tamoxifen "may help control mania" in patients with bipolar disorder, according to a study published in the March issue of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Aysegul Yildiz, M.D., of the Dokuz Eylül University Medical School in Izmir, Turkey, and colleagues, hope that the drug's "success at controlling mood may lead to new drugs specially aimed at mental illness."

According to [AHN](#) (3/4, Sharma), "roughly half of the men and women who took tamoxifen for three weeks experienced a major decrease on their mania compared to people taking a placebo," the small study found.

Tamoxifen, which "helps suppress breast cancer by interfering with the action of the female hormone estrogen in the body," also "inhibits the activity of a family of enzymes known as protein kinase C (PKC)," [HealthDay](#) (3/3, Gardner) adds. PKC activity "may be altered during the mania state of bipolar disorder, experts say." Drugs currently in use that treat bipolar disorder, "including librium and valproate sodium, [also] inhibit PKC-associated signaling in the brain."

[WebMD](#) (3/3, Boyles) reports that the researchers "treated 50 manic bipolar patients with either tamoxifen or placebo for three weeks." At the same time, "[p]atients in both groups were also treated with the anti-anxiety sedative lorazepam, as needed, to help control their symptoms." Following "three weeks of treatment, the tamoxifen-treated patients had significantly lower scores on tests designed to measure the severity of manic symptoms, while the scores of placebo-treated patients

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