

Child Mania Rating Scale (CMRS) Scoring Tips

The **Child Mania Rating Scale** can be helpful in identifying symptoms that *might* signal bipolar disorder, for which antidepressants are relatively contraindicated. Ask the parent to fill it out, then *tally the total score of all items*. Scores of 20 or higher are worrisome. A high score alone, however, doesn't mean that the kid has bipolar disorder, but just that 'something big' is going wrong in the eyes of the rater. The 'something big' can include overwhelmed parent/chaotic home, desire to receive SSI payments, side effects from any current meds, non-bipolar psychosis, bipolar disorder, or many other things.

On the **CMRS**, look at *more* than just the total score to try to figure things out:

- Items #1 (euphoria) and #5 (decreased *need* for sleep, which is different from insomnia, where you need and want it but aren't getting it) are perhaps *most* specific to bipolar disorder, so if there is a score of 2 or 3 on either item, along with a high total score, consider more strongly a possible bipolar disorder.
- Items #3 and #4 are screening for grandiosity but may often be over-endorsed or misunderstood by angry/stressed/depressed caregivers.
- Item #8 (racing thoughts) is commonly endorsed for *many* disorders besides bipolar disorder, such as PTSD and ADHD.
- Item #13 (hypersexual behavior) is most endorsed when there is bipolar disorder and/or sexual abuse, which would also need to be ruled out as a causative factor.
- Items #20 and #21 *can* signal psychosis.

There's even more info to be found in the Educational Module on Use of Specific Rating Scales available on the [WI CPCP website](#) for CME credit.

