

THE MONEY IN MANIA

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In the mid-1990s as the patents on the antidepressants came close to expiring, the pharmaceutical industry decided to market a new group of drugs – the mood stabilizers – and a new illness bipolar disorder. These are drugs that have no proven effects in reducing the frequency of mood swings. They have serious side effects and cost more than the antidepressants. Despite these drawbacks and the availability of a cheaper more effective treatment for what used to be called manic-depressive illness, companies have largely succeeded in persuading doctors to re-diagnose their depressed patients as bipolar. The methods used have involved co-opting academics, ghostwriting articles, creating patient groups and using measurements that create illness. In doing this, company marketing departments have shown themselves to be post-modernists par excellence.