The Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center at the Institute of Living was founded in 2001 with the goal of being at the forefront of research in psychiatric and psychological disorders. Researchers involved with the Center come from the IOL, Yale, University of Connecticut, and Johns Hopkins, and collaborate with these institutions in the field of research.

The current study on bipolar, schizophrenia, and schizoaffective disorder at the Olin Center is part of a multi-site study with partners at the University of Georgia, University of Chicago, Harvard Medical School, and University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

We have a study for people who suffer from bipolar, schizophrenia, and schizoaffective disorder, but the ONRC is continually recruiting people without mental illness interested in contributing to scientific research by serving as a community control.

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Research background
Clinicians have rules to help them diagnose psychotic and mood disorders (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), but these conditions overlap a lot in terms of their symptoms.

Many people believe that these disorders require an improved approach to diagnosing them. Using clinical symptoms alone fails to categorize, and therefore treat, these conditions in the best way possible. A better solution to this problem is to develop classifications of these conditions based on biological measurements, which may be more effective at identifying causes, and treatments.

Biomarkers are measures of physiological or cognitive traits, like EEG or MRI measurements that are commonly found in people with a family history of mental illness, even if that person does not have the illness.

These new techniques also allow us to identify genetic differences associated with risk for these illnesses.

What is involved?
This research study involves safe procedures that include:

Clinical Interviews
Speaking with a member of the research staff to gather background information.

Cognitive Testing
Simple paper/pencil and computer tasks to study memory, attention, and thought processes.

Laboratory Tests
A small sample of blood and a skin biopsy may be collected to study genetics (a urine drug test is also required to participate in the study).

Neuroimaging
An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and an EEG (electro-encephalogram) will be used to capture information about the structure and function of the brain (non-radioactive, non-invasive) during rest and task performance. An eye tracker will also be used to study eye movements.

Seeking volunteers
If you or someone you know would be interested in participating, we are looking for 18-60 year old men or women that have:

• No personal history of major mental illness, and no family history of major mental illness or

• A diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or bipolar disorder

We cannot accept volunteers with serious medical problems, or prolonged alcohol/drug abuse or dependence.

Every participant earns $20 an hour upon completion of the study. There is no charge for any test. A flat fee of $40 will be given for participation in the skin biopsy. Whenever possible, we will assist with free transportation and lunch for participants living outside the immediate hospital area.