

Schizophrenia sufferers miss out on heart disease diagnosis

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(Medical Xpress)—Those diagnosed with schizophrenia are less likely than the general population to have a recorded diagnosis of heart disease, a new report published in *BMJ Open* has found.

This is of significance because on average, people with schizophrenia die between 15-20 years earlier than the general population and the most common cause of death is cardiovascular disease.

The researchers looked at the primary care records of almost 1.8 million individuals in Scotland and found that people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia have very high levels of multiple physical health problems, such as diabetes and hepatitis, but are less likely than the general population to have a recorded diagnosis of [heart disease](#).

The findings suggest a systematic failure within the health service to adequately detect, record and treat cardiovascular disease in people with schizophrenia and open up the possibility of developing new integrated services for this group of patients aimed at improving their physical health, quality of life and life expectancy.

Dr Daniel Smith, Reader in Psychiatry, part of The University of Glasgow's Institute of Health and Wellbeing said

"This study has found that people with schizophrenia have a wide range of multiple physical health problems but are less likely than people without schizophrenia to have a primary care record of cardiovascular

disease. This suggests a systematic under-recognition and under-treatment of cardiovascular disease in people with [schizophrenia](#) which might contribute to substantial [premature mortality](#) observed within this patient group."

"We need to investigate further the relationship between [cardiovascular disease](#) and serious mental illness but our work suggests that the NHS can do more to detect [heart problems](#) in this vulnerable group and reduce the current inequality in diagnosis and treatment."

More information: bmjopen.bmj.com/content/3/4/e002808.abstract

Provided by University of Glasgow

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