

Mental disorders lead to greater heart disease risk, study shows

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(Medical Xpress)—Men with mental disorders are more at risk of developing coronary heart disease, according to a study by the Universities of Southampton and Edinburgh.

Researchers have identified an increased risk of non-fatal or fatal [heart disease](#) across a spectrum of mental conditions, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, neurotic disorders, substance-use disorders and [personality disorders](#).

The study evaluated more than one million Swedish men, born between 1950 and 1976 who underwent psychiatric and medical assessment during military conscription examinations and were then followed up for around 22 years.

Data on coronary heart disease that these men developed was obtained from the Swedish Cause of Death Register and the Country's National Hospital Discharge Register. The Hospital Discharge Register also provided information on psychiatric hospital admissions.

The study by researchers at the Universities of Southampton and Edinburgh— and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm – is published in the journal *Circulation*. An increased risk of developing heart disease was evident in men diagnosed with mental disorders at around age 18 and in those who, at a later age, were admitted to hospital for [psychiatric disorders](#).

The findings demonstrate that the link between mental disorder and coronary heart disease is not confined to a few disorders or to those whose disorder is severe. The study indicates the highest risk tended to be in those whose mental condition required hospital admission.

The team investigated whether the link between [mental disorder](#) and the subsequent development of coronary heart disease was caused by smoking habits, alcohol intake, blood pressure, diabetes, level of obesity, intelligence or socioeconomic status measured at age 18. However, in general, these factors did not appear to significantly influence any link.

Catharine Gale, Reader in Epidemiology based at the Universities of Southampton and Edinburgh, said: "Our findings suggest that mental disorders pose a huge public health burden in terms of premature illness and death due to [coronary heart disease](#). The physical health care of people with mental disorders needs to be a priority for clinicians if this burden is to be reduced."

Provided by University of Southampton

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