

# Diabetes, epilepsy and asthma increase risk of self-harm

February 13 2014

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New research quantifying the risk of admission to hospital for self-harm has identified a raised risk of self-harm among groups of patients with certain physical illnesses. While it is known that psychiatric illnesses are associated with a greatly elevated risk of self-harm, a moderately elevated risk was seen with common physical illnesses such as diabetes, epilepsy and asthma. The research, published today by the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, investigated the risk of self-harm comparing people with different psychiatric and physical disorders in England.

Other [physical illnesses](#) carrying an increased risk of self-harm include migraine, psoriasis, eczema and inflammatory polyarthropathies. The research team, led by Professor Michael Goldacre, of the Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford, also found that epilepsy, asthma, eczema and cancers carry a moderately increased risk of suicide.

The new National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England includes several priority groups, including those living with long-term physical health conditions. Authors Dr Arvind Singhal and Dr Jack Ross said: "It is important for physicians, general practitioners and [mental health workers](#) to be aware of the physical disorders that are associated with an increased risk of self-harm so that at-risk individuals may be better identified and can be monitored for any psychiatric symptoms and mental distress."

Professor Keith Hawton, Director of the Oxford Centre for Suicide

Research and an author of the paper, pointed to the need for greater integration of medical and [mental health services](#).

**More information:** Risk of self-harm and suicide in people with specific psychiatric and physical disorders: comparisons between disorders using English national record linkage ([DOI: 10.1177/0141076814522033](#)) will be published by the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* on Thursday 13 February 2014.

Provided by SAGE Publications

Citation: Diabetes, epilepsy and asthma increase risk of self-harm (2014, February 13) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-diabetes-epilepsy-asthma-self-harm.html>

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