

# Cancer could increase risk of other health problems

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(Medical Xpress)—People with cancer are at higher risk of other chronic health conditions, a new Flinders University study shows.

Published yesterday (Monday, July 14) in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, the study found a higher incidence of chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, [high blood pressure](#) and cholesterol in [cancer survivors](#), with prevalence particularly high among men.

Using information from the South Australian Monitoring and Surveillance System, the study compared the general health of 2160 South Australian adult cancer survivors with 4100 matched adults without cancer.

Senior author Professor Bogda Koczwara from the Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer says the study is the first of its kind to demonstrate that Australian cancer survivors may be at greater risk of developing other chronic conditions than those without cancer.

"We found that there was a much higher prevalence of chronic conditions in the cancer group than the non-cancer group," Professor Koczwara says.

"This finding was irrespective of lifestyle factors such as nutrition, physical activity and obesity, which were the same in cancer survivors and the control group," she says.

Professor Koczwara says it is still not clear whether people with chronic conditions are more predisposed to cancer, or whether cancer and its treatments make people more susceptible to other chronic conditions.

"Our data does not allow us to determine if they were diagnosed with cancer first or if they had a [chronic condition](#) first so we can't say cancer causes [chronic health conditions](#) or chronic health conditions cause cancer.

"Overall, the research highlights the need for health care providers to ensure the care of cancer survivors adequately address the additional burden of chronic disease."

**More information:** The study results are available online: [www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/20 ... tween-people-history](http://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/20...tween-people-history)

Provided by Flinders University

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