

Higher mortality risk in individuals with mental health disorders

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Individuals with mental health disorders have a risk of mortality that is two times higher than the general population or than individuals without such disorders, according to a study published online by *JAMA Psychiatry*.

The link between [mental health disorders](#) and mortality is complicated because most people with those disorders do not die of their condition. Also, [mental health](#) disorders are associated with risk factors for mortality. Quantifying and understanding mortality among people with mental health disorders can inform approaches to address the issue, according to the study background.

Elizabeth Reisinger Walker, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.A.T., of Emory University, Atlanta, and coauthors reviewed medical literature to examine mortality among people with mental health disorders. Their meta-analysis included 203 articles from 29 countries.

Analysis by the authors indicates that the relative risk of mortality among those with mental health disorders (from 148 studies) was 2.22 times higher than the comparison population. A total of 67.3 percent of the deaths among people with mental health disorders were due to natural causes, 17.5 percent to unnatural causes and the remainder of the deaths to other or unknown causes. The median (midpoint) of potential life lost was 10 years.

"We estimate that 14.3 percent of deaths worldwide, or approximately 8

million deaths each year, are attributable to mental disorders. ... People with mental disorders experience a high burden of [mortality](#) at the individual and population levels. Reduction of this burden will require a focus on less prevalent but more severe diagnoses and more common [mental disorders](#). Likewise, efforts must be made to prevent and manage comorbid medical conditions and reduce the occurrence of unnatural deaths in this vulnerable population," the study concludes.

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