

Personality disorders have long-term effects on mental health and social relationships

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Credit: University of Bristol

People with personality disorder (PD) have enduring relationship difficulties. The condition affects about one in 20 people in the UK and up to 40 per cent of adult mental health service users.

Most research in the field has taken place in clinical settings, and little is known little about the health effects of personality disorder in the

general population.

A study led by the University of Bristol, in collaboration with the University of Melbourne, has for the first time provided a fuller understanding of the disease burden associated with [personality disorders](#). The study was published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*.

Dr Paul Moran, from Bristol's School of Social and Community Medicine was the study's lead author. He said: "Using data from an Australian community sample, we tracked the health and social outcomes of people with personality disorder, 11 years after they were originally assessed for the presence of personality difficulties or personality disorder.

"At the age of 24, personality disorder was already linked with social disadvantage, substance misuse and poor [mental health](#). Eleven years later, the presence of personality pathology predicted the occurrence of anxiety and depression, as well as the absence of long-term relationships. What is most striking is that these associations were not due to pre-existing mental health, substance use or social problems.

"People with personality disorder appear to be a distinctly vulnerable group with regards to future mental health and relationship problems. There is no doubt that future efforts to understand population health could be more successful if they took account of personality pathology.

"Furthermore, there is a pressing need for early intervention, as well as innovative strategies to address the substantial disease burden experienced by people with personality disorder."

More information: Paul Moran et al. The influence of personality disorder on the future mental health and social adjustment of young adults: a population-based, longitudinal cohort study, *The Lancet*

Psychiatry (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/S2215-0366\(16\)30029-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(16)30029-3)

Provided by University of Bristol

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