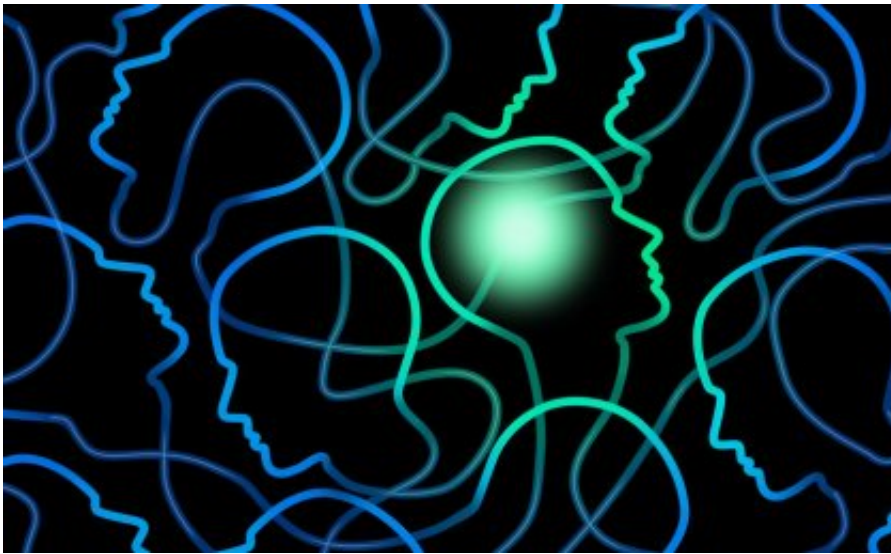


Global burden of mental and substance use disorders remains high

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The UQ team performed the mental and substance use disorder modelling used in the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2015. Credit: University of Queensland

More effort is needed to reduce the global and Australian burden of mental and substance abuse disorders – the world's leading cause of disability – University of Queensland researchers say.

School of Public Health researcher Professor Harvey Whiteford said a UQ team performed the mental and substance use disorder modelling used in the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2015 – a scientific analysis of more than 300 diseases and injuries in 195 countries.

The series of papers published in a dedicated issue of [*The Lancet*](#) provides in-depth analysis of causes of death, overall disease burden and life expectancy, years lived with disability, and the risk factors that lead to health loss.

"This analysis shows we haven't been able to reduce the burden of mental and substance use disorders to the extent we have for many diseases such as infections and some cancers," Professor Whiteford said.

"For those diseases we have introduced proven prevention measures, something we don't have yet for most mental disorders.

Research Fellow Dr Alize Ferrari said the data showed that depressive disorders followed by anxiety disorders and schizophrenia were the major drivers of the burden from [mental disorders](#).

"While the burden from these disorders has not decreased, the study does tell us that, despite all the speculation we are now living more stressed lives, there is no evidence the rates of mental disorder are escalating," Dr Ferrari said.

The Global Burden of Diseases Study study is coordinated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington in Seattle and draws on the work of more than 1800 collaborators in almost 130 countries and territories.

Researchers at the Queensland Centre of Mental Health Research, a joint UQ and Queensland Health research facility, were involved in the study.

Dr Ferrari said UQ was one of only a handful of universities world-wide with the technical capacity to contribute to the data modelling used to produce the final results.

"It is expected that the Global Burden of Diseases study will produce annual reports moving forward, and this will allow authorities to track the effectiveness of mental health policies," she said.

Provided by University of Queensland

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