

Infections more common in people with schizophrenia

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(HealthDay)—People with schizophrenia may face an increased risk for

serious infections, a new study suggests.

"The preliminary data results suggest that individuals with [schizophrenia](#) have higher prevalence of all types of severe infections compared to the background population," study author Monika Pankiewicz-Dulacz, from the University of Southern Denmark, and colleagues wrote.

"Clinicians should be aware that people with schizophrenia are the risk group for severe infections. General guidelines and suggestions regarding prevention of severe infections among [schizophrenia patients](#) are needed, and they should address a wide range of areas including hygiene, diet, activities, medications, treatment of comorbid [co-existing] conditions and vaccinations," the researchers concluded.

However, the study's findings only show a link between schizophrenia and certain infections, not a cause-and-effect relationship.

The researchers reviewed data from nearly 894,000 people in Denmark. Almost 8,000 from this group had schizophrenia. All of those in the study were born between 1975 and 1990.

The study authors found that the rate of infectious diseases was 36 percent among people with schizophrenia, compared to 25 percent for the [general population](#).

People with schizophrenia were 63 percent more likely to suffer a serious infection than those in the general population, the researchers said.

Rates of specific severe infections among people with schizophrenia and those in the general population were:

- HIV (0.2 percent vs. 0.05 percent),

- Sepsis (0.7 percent vs. 0.3 percent),
- Hepatitis (1.4 percent vs. 0.2 percent),
- Skin infections (12 percent vs. 6 percent),
- Tuberculosis (0.12 percent vs. 0.06 percent),
- Gastrointestinal infections (8.7 percent vs. 6 percent),
- Genital infections (2.6 percent vs. 1.5 percent),
- Urologic infections (3.6 percent vs. 2 percent).

The researchers adjusted the data for other factors that might affect a person's risk of infection. They still found that people with schizophrenia had about twice the risk of skin, urological or genital infections, or tuberculosis than those in the general population.

The investigators also found that addiction and having other health problems were the most important factors associated with severe infection. Each one increased the risk of serious [infection](#) by 2.7 times in both [people](#) with schizophrenia and those in the general [population](#).

The study was presented Monday at the European Congress on Psychiatry in Florence, Italy. Until published in a peer-reviewed journal, findings presented at meetings are generally viewed as preliminary.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Mental Health has more on [schizophrenia](#).

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