

New score measuring multiple chronic illnesses performs better than current method

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A new score that measures multiple long-term health conditions performs better than the current Charlson Comorbidity Index and may help in health care planning and delivery, according to new research in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

"Multimorbidity scores offer a means of identifying those patients in the population who are most likely to benefit from a tailored approach to care, helping clinicians to prioritize their efforts accordingly," writes Dr. Rupert Payne, Centre for Academic Primary Care, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom, with coauthors.

Researchers from the United Kingdom developed and tested a measure of multiple illnesses, called the Cambridge Multimorbidity Score, using data from general practitioner records in the United Kingdom. They looked at 37 comorbidities and associated outcomes, such as general practitioner visits, unplanned hospital admissions and death.

"The score outperforms the widely used Charlson index across all outcomes. Performance is best for predicting death, particularly after adjusting for age and gender, and least good for predicting consultations with [primary care physicians](#)," says Dr. Payne.

The Cambridge Multimorbidity Score can be a useful predictor of future health care use, including emergency department visits and primary care

utilization.

"These scores may be of considerable value for policy development and health care priority-setting, providing accurate, easy-to-implement ways of optimizing [health care delivery](#) to an [aging population](#) with multiple illnesses," says Dr. Payne.

More information: *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (2020).
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