

# Preterm birth may up risk for later mental health issues

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(HealthDay)—Higher rates of prescription of psychotropic drugs are

seen during adolescence and young adulthood for those born prematurely compared with those born at full term, according to a study published online March 12 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Christine Strand Bachmann, M.D., from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, and colleagues compared the prescription of psychotropic drugs in adolescence and young adulthood (ages 10 to 23 years) between 505,030 individuals born at preterm or [full term](#) (between 1989 and 1998).

The researchers found that individuals born preterm had an increased risk of psychotropic drug prescription, with a dose-response association between gestational age and prescription. There were higher rates of prescription for all [drug](#) types among the extremely preterm group versus peers born at term (odds ratios [ORs], 1.7 for antidepressants to 2.7 for psychostimulants [95 percent confidence intervals (CIs), 1.4 to 2.1 and 2.1 to 3.4, respectively]). In the moderately to late preterm group, the elevated odds of prescription of all types were less pronounced (ORs, 1.1 [95 percent CI, 1.0 to 1.1] for antidepressants and 1.2 [95 percent CI, 1.1 to 1.2] for psychostimulants). In a sibling analysis, the OR for any prescription was 1.8 (95 percent CI, 1.2 to 2.8) in the very preterm group and 1.0 (95 percent CI, 0.9 to 1.1) in the moderately or late preterm group.

"These results provide further evidence for an increased risk of mental health impairment among individuals born preterm and suggest that this is not restricted to the most preterm groups," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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