

Study suggests unresolved anxiety may increase the risk of developing dementia

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In a [study published](#) in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, both chronic and new anxiety were associated with an increased risk of dementia. However, where anxiety had resolved, there was no

association with dementia risk.

The study included 2,132 individuals with an average age of 76 years who were participating in the Hunter Community Study in Australia and who were followed for an average of 10 years.

The presence of chronic [anxiety](#) and new onset anxiety were associated with 2.8- and 3.2-times higher risks of having dementia, respectively. Even higher risks were seen in adults with anxiety before the age of 70 years. People whose anxiety resolved did not have a higher [dementia risk](#) than people without current or past anxiety.

"While this sort of question cannot be subject to a [randomized controlled trial](#), this [prospective cohort study](#) used causal inference methods to explore the role of anxiety in promoting the development of dementia," said corresponding author Kay Khaing, MMed, of the University of Newcastle.

"The findings suggest that anxiety may be a new risk factor to target in the prevention of dementia and also indicate that treating anxiety may reduce this risk."

More information: The effect of anxiety on all cause dementia: a longitudinal analysis from the Hunter Community Study, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.19078](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.19078)

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