

# New joint clinical trial may improve cognitive function in those with schizophrenia, diabetes

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In a joint study between Australia's University of Wollongong and China's Beijing HuiLongGuan Hospital, researchers led by Dr Mei Han have found that the prevention and treatment of diabetes might prove beneficial for people with schizophrenia and may yield better cognitive functioning, especially in immediate memory and attention. This has the potential to improve daily life and restore skills that could allow return to the workforce.

Diabetes has been reported to occur about two to four times more frequently in patients with schizophrenia than in the general population. As schizophrenia and diabetes are both associated with cognitive impairment, it was thought that patients with both diseases may suffer an increased rate and magnitude of cognitive deficits.

The study, which was published in the scientific journal *PLoS One*, found this to be accurate with indications that people with both schizophrenia and diabetes were more cognitively impaired in the areas of immediate memory and attention than people with schizophrenia alone and people with diabetes alone.

These findings indicate that the memory deficits found in schizophrenia could, in part, reflect disturbed [glucose regulation](#), and that improvement of [glucose metabolism](#) could improve these deficits.

"A number of our previous studies have shown us that many atypical antipsychotics increase the likelihood of people with schizophrenia developing Type II diabetes," says Professor Xu-Feng Huang at the University of Wollongong. "What this study tells us is that treating diabetes in people with schizophrenia may improve their cognitive functioning, which could have a positive impact on everyday life."

Preclinical studies, led by Institute-supported Prof. Huang, have also indicated that the compound teasaponin, which is found in green tea, and DHA, which can be found in fish oil, could be useful as adjunct treatments in reducing chronic [brain inflammation](#) that is linked with the causes of obesity, type II diabetes and cognitive impairment.

Provided by Schizophrenia Research Institute

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