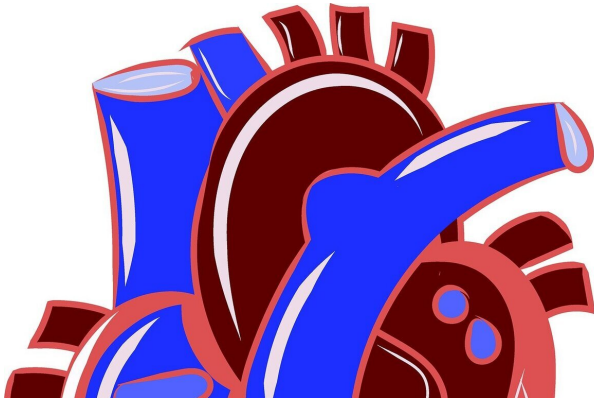


Study finds depression associated with greater risk of cardiovascular disease

16 June 2020, by Melissa Shaw



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A new study co-led by Simon Fraser University health sciences professor Scott Lear provides further evidence of the link between depressive symptoms and an increased risk of heart disease and early death.

The global study tracked 145,862 middle-aged participants from 21 countries and found a 20 per cent increase in cardiovascular events and death in people with four or more [depressive symptoms](#). The risks were twice as high in urban areas—where the majority of the global population will be living by 2050—and more than double in men.

Depression and mental health issues are highly prevalent in Canada. One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem during their lifetime and eight per cent will experience a major depressive event.

Lear says the results are timely as experts anticipate an increase in the number of people dealing with [mental health issues](#) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data suggests that depressive symptoms

should be considered as important as traditional risk factors such as smoking, [high blood pressure](#) and high cholesterol when preventing heart disease and [early death](#).

The study results, published this month in *JAMA Psychiatry*, lend credibility to existing World Health Organization (WHO) policies to integrate treatment and prevention of mental disorders into primary care.

The study concludes that a greater awareness of the physical health risks associated with depression is needed.

Researchers suggest that a comprehensive approach to tackling non-communicable diseases and mental disorders—to achieve health-related UN Sustainable Development Goals—needs to be a global priority.

More information: Selina Rajan et al, Association of Symptoms of Depression With Cardiovascular Disease and Mortality in Low-, Middle-, and High-Income Countries, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2020). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.1351](#)

Provided by Simon Fraser University

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