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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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How is cancer related to schizophrenia?

Cancer is a broad group of diseases involving abnormal cell growth, where cells divide and grow forming malignant tumours. Cancer may spread through the lymphatic system or blood stream. Lifestyle, genetic factors and environmental pollutants increase a persons' risk of developing cancer. People with schizophrenia show increased exposure to risk factors associated with cancer, such as smoking, physical inactivity, poor diet, obesity, substance abuse, diabetes and hepatitis.

What is the evidence for comorbid cancer?

Moderate to high quality evidence finds a small increase in the rate of breast cancer in females with schizophrenia compared to general population rates. Lung cancer may also be increased in females with schizophrenia. There were small to medium-sized decreases in rates of prostate and colorectal cancers in males with schizophrenia, and a small decrease in malignant melanoma in both males and females with schizophrenia. Decreased incidence of liver cancer was found prior to a diagnosis of schizophrenia in both males and females, and increased incidence of liver cancer was found after a diagnosis of schizophrenia in males only. There were no differences in rates of brain or stomach cancers.

High quality evidence also finds a small decreased incidence of any cancer in parents and siblings of people with schizophrenia.

Cancer-related mortality in people with schizophrenia was increased by about 40% compared to general population rates.

For more information see the technical table

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.