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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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How is heart disease related to schizophrenia?

People with schizophrenia may show increased rates of co-occurring conditions, including heart disease. It is unclear if any increased risk is a consequence of the metabolic impact of antipsychotic administration or unhealthy lifestyle choices, or most likely, a combination of both.

What is the evidence for comorbid heart disease?

Moderate quality evidence finds small increases in rates of coronary heart disease and congestive heart failure in people with schizophrenia, with rates gained from both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, and from data adjusted for potential confounding factors. Longitudinal studies with adjusted data also show small to medium-sized increases in rates of cardiovascular disease and death due to cardiovascular disease in people with schizophrenia. Moderate to low quality evidence finds a medium-sized effect of increased risk of myocardial infarction in patients taking antipsychotics compared to those not taking antipsychotics. Moderate quality evidence suggests rates of myocarditis and cardiomyopathy are similar in people taking clozapine, with incidence of myocarditis 0.6% and cardiomyopathy 0.7%.

Moderate to high quality evidence finds a large effect of reduced overall heart rate variability in people with schizophrenia. Chronic patients show a larger effect size than first-episode patients for reduced high-frequency heart rate variability, while first-episode patients showed a larger effect size for reduced root mean square of successive R-R interval differences RMSSD.

Moderate quality evidence finds cardiac patients with schizophrenia may be less likely to have a cardiac procedure, including revascularisation, angiogram or reperfusion than cardiac patients without schizophrenia. A small effect shows cardiac patients with schizophrenia may also be less likely to be prescribed an angiotensin converting enzyme/angiotensin receptor blocker.

For more information see the technical table



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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.

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.