

Risk for psychiatric disorders up for spouses of patients with cancer

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Spouses of patients with cancer have an increased risk for psychiatric

disorders, according to a study published online Jan. 5 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Kejia Hu, M.D., from the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, and colleagues examined the overall burden of [psychiatric disorders](#) among spouses of patients with cancer diagnosed in Denmark and Sweden versus spouses of individuals without cancer (exposed and unexposed groups) in a population-based cohort study. Data were included for 546,321 spouses in the exposed group and 2,731,574 in the unexposed group with no preexisting psychiatric morbidity.

The researchers found that the incidence rates of first-onset psychiatric disorders were 6.8 and 5.9 per 1,000 patient-years, respectively, for the exposed and unexposed groups during follow-up (median, 8.4 and 7.6 years, respectively). During the first year after cancer diagnoses, there was an increase seen in the risk for first-onset psychiatric disorders (adjusted hazard ratio, 1.30), especially for depression and stress-related disorders (adjusted hazard ratios, 1.38 and 2.04, respectively). During the entire follow-up, there was a 14 percent increase in the risk for first-onset psychiatric disorders, which was similar for substance abuse, depression, and stress-related disorders. The increase in risk was most prominent for spouses of patients diagnosed with cancer with [poor prognosis](#) (e.g., adjusted hazard ratio, 1.41 for [pancreatic cancer](#)), cancer at an [advanced stage](#), and when the patient died during follow-up (adjusted hazard ratios, 1.31 and 1.29, respectively).

"These results support the need of clinical awareness to prevent potential mental illness among the spouses of patients with [cancer](#), especially in these high-risk groups," the authors write.

More information: Kejia Hu et al, Risk of Psychiatric Disorders Among Spouses of Patients With Cancer in Denmark and Sweden, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI](#):

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