



## Research Article

# Effect of contributing factors on the incidence of non-communicable diseases among adults with common mental health disorders: a systematic review

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## Plain language summary

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**N**on-communicable diseases (the most common are cancer, heart disease, lung disease and diabetes) are known to be chronic in nature [World Health Organization. *Noncommunicable Diseases: Fact Sheet*. 2022. URL: [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases) (accessed 20 January 2022)] and are not caused by an acute infection (Pan American Health Organization. *Noncommunicable Diseases*. 2023. URL: [www.paho.org/en/topics/noncommunicable-diseases](http://www.paho.org/en/topics/noncommunicable-diseases) (accessed 16 September 2023)). It is widely recognised that mental health and non-communicable diseases are linked, but we do not fully understand how. This thorough review of available literature aimed to find factors that link mental ill-health to the occurrence of non-communicable diseases in adults. This will help plan protective measures, such as policies and interventions aimed at risk factor reduction, for people at high risk for non-communicable diseases and mental illness. Four databases were searched from February to August 2019 for studies of adults with common mental health disorders (like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder) that looked at the causal effect of determinants of mental health on the occurrence of common non-communicable diseases. The search terms found 15,266 papers, of which 11 met the criteria for data extraction. Most of the studies showed that those suffering from depression or post-traumatic stress disorder were more likely to also experience non-communicable diseases. If mental health problems are long-standing, this risk for non-communicable diseases is even greater. There is a particularly strong link between mental health problems and the onset of a non-communicable disease if the person is older, has a higher body mass index, is a woman, smoked, has a lower level of educational attainment or belongs to either black or Hispanic ethnic groups. Findings from this study can inform health practice and policy in efforts to lower the burden of non-communicable diseases and mental health disorders. Interventions targeted towards identifying and treating mental health illnesses and the factors linking both lower the burden of mental health disorders and prevent the subsequent development of non-communicable diseases.