

The Mind/Body Connection

Mental Illness and Addiction and Their Relationship to Physical Illness

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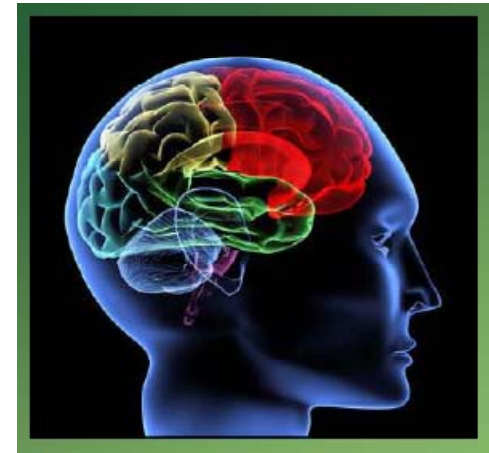
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

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Mind and Body are Inseparable

- Everyday language tends to encourage a misperception that 'mental health' or 'mental illness' is unrelated to 'physical health' or 'physical illness.'
- In fact, the two are inseparable.
- The body and mind are integrally connected. Untreated mental illness can shorten the life span by up to 25 years - and depression can actually **lead** to heart disease. A 2009 study conducted by Columbia University adds to growing evidence that depression is an independent risk factor for heart disease – on top of the classic risks of high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and smoking.
- It is time to treat our brain the same as we treat the rest of the organs in our body.

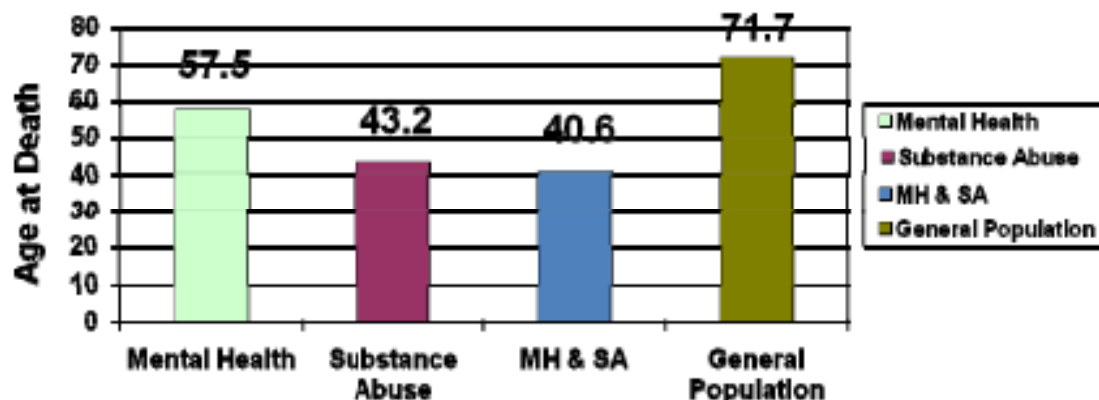


Oklahomans – Especially Those With Mental Illness or Addiction – Die Too Soon

As most people know, mental and addictive disorders can be deadly, but the average lifespan of Oklahomans with these diseases is far shorter than the average Oklahoman.

Mortality

Average Age at Death by Cohort



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United Health Foundation Report

National rankings for Oklahoma (2009):

- Overall rank – 49th
- Cardiovascular deaths – 48th
- Poor mental health days – 46th
- Poor physical health days – 46th
- Prevalence of obesity – 46th
- Prevalence of smoking – 46th



Holistic Health is A Two-Way Street

- As we can see from the United Health Foundation report, the health of Oklahomans, in general, is poor.
- But why are people with mental illness and addiction dying years before their time? Some may think these early deaths are due to suicide or homicide or other 'consequences' of having a behavioral health disorder. To some extent, this is true. But what is even MORE true is that people with mental and addictive disorders are much more likely to have co-existing chronic physical conditions that are the real reasons their lives are cut short.



Depression: What Other Conditions Might Also Exist?

- A 2007 study from the CDC reported significant relationships between depression and anxiety and chronic diseases such as asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.
- There's also a link between depression and obesity. Some medications for depression contribute to weight gain and depression also may play a role in weight gain through interference with the endocrine system. It becomes a cycle, because being overweight or obese often contributes to low self-esteem, enhancing depression.



Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia

- People with bipolar disorder are at higher risk for thyroid disease, migraine headaches, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and other physical illnesses.
- Individuals with schizophrenia have a 20% shorter life expectancy than the population at large and a greater vulnerability to several illnesses, including diabetes, coronary heart disease, hypertension, and emphysema.

Addiction: What Physical Conditions May Result?

- Prolonged substance abuse can lead to cardiovascular disease, cancer, hypertension, pneumonia, and a number of other illnesses. Excessive use of alcohol, in particular, can lead to brain degeneration; cancers of the larynx, esophagus, liver and colon; cirrhosis of the liver; depression; esophageal bleeding; heart muscle damage; nerve damage; pancreatitis; severe memory loss; and a host of other physical complications.



Owen Franken / PNI

(Medline Plus, 2009)

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What About Nicotine?

- Cancer
 - Lung diseases
 - Hypertension
 - Heart attacks, strokes, and blood vessel diseases
 - Macular degeneration and blindness
-
- In 2007, 20% of Oklahoma adults reported smoking every day, which was greater than the national rate of 15%.





Tobacco Use by Type of Diagnosis

Persons with a current mental illness smoked 44% of all cigarettes in the U.S. An estimated 200,000 smokers with mental illness or addiction die each year from smoking.

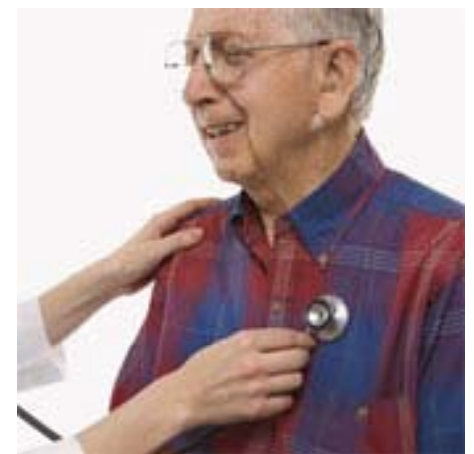
*Journal of Dual Diagnosis
April 2009*

Schizophrenia	62-90%
Bipolar disorder	51-70%
Major depression	36-80%
Anxiety disorders	32-60%
Post-traumatic stress disorder	45-60%
Attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder	38-42%
Alcohol abuse	34-80%
Other drug abuse	49-98%

14th World Conference on Tobacco, March 9, 2009

Cardiovascular Disease

- The United Health Foundation Report shows that Oklahoma has one of the highest rates of death from cardiovascular disease in the nation.
- Cardiovascular disease is also a common co-existing condition among people with mental or addictive disorders. In fact, cardiovascular death among those with serious mental illness is 2-3 times that of the general population.
- The four main categories of cardiovascular disease include coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure (hypertension) and heart failure.
- Poor nutrition, lack of exercise, smoking, genetics and other factors influence heart disease – but cardiovascular disease is very preventable.



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Alcohol-Induced Liver Disease

The liver breaks down alcohol so it can be eliminated from your body. If you consume more alcohol than the liver can process, the resulting imbalance can injure the liver by interfering with its normal breakdown of protein, fats, and carbohydrates.

There are three kinds of liver disease related to alcohol consumption:

- **Fatty liver** is marked by a build-up of fat cells in the liver. Fatty liver occurs in almost all people who drink heavily. The condition will improve after you stop drinking.
- **Alcoholic hepatitis** is an inflammation of the liver. Up to 35% of heavy drinkers develop alcoholic hepatitis. In its mild form, alcoholic hepatitis can last for years and will cause progressive liver damage. The damage may be reversible if you stop drinking. In its severe form, the disease may occur suddenly, after binge drinking, and it can quickly lead to life-threatening complications.
- **Alcoholic cirrhosis** is the most serious type of alcohol-induced liver disease. Cirrhosis refers to the replacement of normal liver tissue with scar tissue. Between 10 and 20% of heavy drinkers develop cirrhosis, usually after 10 or more years of drinking. The damage from cirrhosis is not reversible, and it is a life-threatening disease. Your condition may stabilize if you stop drinking.

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Progression of Alcohol-Induced Liver Disease

- Many heavy drinkers will progress from fatty liver to alcoholic hepatitis and finally to alcoholic cirrhosis, though the progression may vary from patient to patient. About 40% of the 26,000 people who die from cirrhosis each year have a history of alcohol abuse.
- Women are more likely to be affected by alcohol-induced liver disease because women can be affected by smaller amounts of alcohol than men.
- Anyone with alcohol-induced liver disease will improve their health and life expectancy if they stop drinking. For patients who do not stop drinking, the outlook is poor; they are likely to suffer a variety of life-threatening health problems caused by alcohol-related liver damage.



Obesity and Mental Illness

- Nearly one of every three Oklahomans is considered obese, defined as more than 20% over a person's ideal weight.
- Obesity is one of the most common physical health care problems among persons with severe and persistent mental illness. People with depression or bipolar disorder are twice as likely to be obese as the general population; in people with schizophrenia, that likelihood is three times greater.
- A two-year study by the National Institute of Mental Health found that obesity was associated with a 25% increase in the likelihood of major depression, bipolar disorder and panic disorder.
- Although the risk of depression over a lifetime is about 20%, the study found a rate of 28% among people who are obese, a statistically significant difference.
- So, which comes first – obesity or mental illness? Experts believe the two conditions perpetuate one another.



Obesity and Mental Illness

Shorter Lifespans Ahead?

- Increased desire to eat and weight gain are common symptoms of depression. Also, medications prescribed for depression or anxiety disorders can encourage weight gain.
- It is well established that loss of self-esteem associated with the stigma of obesity can contribute to depression, especially among women. Another possibility is that an independent cause (or causes) – such as child abuse, for example – may influence the risk of both obesity and depression.
- In addition to the greater risk of psychological problems, the obesity epidemic in the U.S. places an ever-growing number of people at risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes hypertension, arthritis, kidney disease and cancer.
- If left unchecked, health experts fear it could lead to a general decline in life expectancy.

(National Institute of Mental Health)



Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. It often goes undiagnosed because many of its symptoms seem so harmless.

- **Type 1 diabetes** is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin, a hormone needed to allow sugar (glucose) to enter cells to produce energy. **Type 2 diabetes**, which is far more common, occurs when the body becomes resistant to the effects of insulin or doesn't make enough insulin.
- Type 2 diabetes is a highly prevalent chronic medical condition affecting approximately 4% of the U.S. general population. Persons with **schizophrenia** have a particularly high risk for type 2 diabetes, ranging from 16% to 25%. Persons with major **mood disorders** are also at higher risk for type 2 diabetes, compared with the general population.
- In addition to medication, treatment typically includes a modified diet, exercise, limiting alcohol consumption, stopping tobacco use and monitoring glucose levels.



Cancer Statistics

- The incidence of cancer for adults with mental illness is more than twice (2.5 times) that of the general population. Among persons with mental illness, elevated risk was greatest for men younger than 50 years (6.6 times the risk of a comparable group in the general population) and lowest for women aged 50 years and older (1.8 times the risk of a comparable group).
- Men and women with mental disorders have higher odds of being diagnosed with brain tumors and lung cancer and they develop these cancers at younger ages than individuals without mental illness.
- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston found that at least 50% of patients with advanced or terminal cancer suffer from anxiety, depression or an adjustment disorder
- Tobacco use can cause a number of different types of cancer, including lung cancer, cancer of the throat, larynx, esophagus, stomach, bladder, breast cancer *(2004 Surgeon General's report)*
- Heavy drinking also is associated with higher incidence of esophageal, breast, liver, colon, stomach, pancreas and lungs *(Alcohol and Cancer Alcohol Alert From NIAAA)*

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What Can We Do to Maintain Good Health?

- Eat nutritious meals, with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grain products, and avoid overeating.
- Exercise – this helps relieve pent-up tension and stress, improves blood flow, aids healthy sleep, relieves moderate depression and contributes to a wide range of other health benefits.
- Get enough sleep.
- Don't use tobacco.
- Don't abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Implement healthy, relaxing activities into your lifestyle, including quality time with family, hobbies, reading, listening to music or other healthy activities that bring joy and balance to your life.



Concluding Thoughts

- Physical health is directly connected to mental health and millions of Americans know that suffering from a mental health disorder can be as frightening and debilitating as any major physical health disorder.
- Take care of body and mind – exercise, eat right, get enough sleep, relax and have regular health checkups.
- The body and mind are one, and we need to start treating them as such.