

Cardiovascular Diseases and Mental Disorders: Bidirectional Risk Factors?

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ABSTRACT

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD), their well-established risk factors (CVRF) and mental disorders are common and co-occur more frequently than would be expected by chance. However, potential causal mechanisms underlying their association still need to be elucidated. Several non-mutually exclusive hypotheses have been suggested to explain this association: a) mental disorders could increase vulnerability to CVD through poor health behaviour including smoking, unbalanced diet, **sedentary lifestyle or the side effects of psychotropic drugs;** b) **CVD or their treatment could favour** the development of mental disorders; or c) mental disorders and CVD/CVRF could share risk factors such as common metabolic processes or common genes. Disentangling some of these mechanisms will require studying the temporal relationship of the appearance of CVD and mental disorders.

Herein we review the existing epidemiological evidence of an association between these two types **of disorders, and describe several mechanisms potentially involved. We will briefly describe the** CoLaus/PsyCoLaus study cohort, a population-based in Lausanne, Switzerland designed to address some of these questions.

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