

Depression increases mortality in diabetic patients beyond cardiovascular events

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Depression is encountered in more than one forth of diabetic patients, which is 2 to 3 times the incidence of depression in non-diabetics. The association of depression with diabetes has been linked with increased mortality, but whether this is due to cardiovascular mortality or other causes remains unknown. It has been speculated that since depression in diabetes is associated with poorer glycemic control and higher risk of complication, the main cause of the increased mortality could be increased cardiovascular mortality.

A recent study examined the relation between diabetes and all-cause mortality and specific-cause mortality in a cohort of almost 4200 patients. During a mean follow-up of 4.5 years, 14% of the patients died: 13% of patients with no depression and 18% of patients with depression. The leading causes of death were cardiovascular deaths (43%) and cancer (27%). After adjustment for baseline characteristics,

the presence of depression (as compared to patients without depression) was associated with an increased risk of all-cause mortality (HR = 2.26, 95% CI = 1.79-2.85), cardiovascular mortality (HR = 2.00; 95% CI = 1.37-2.94), and mortality of other causes (HR = 3.35; 95% CI = 2.30-4.89). After further adjustment for health habits, depression was associated with an increased risk of all cause mortality (HR = 1.52; 95% CI = 1.19-1.95) and with non-cancer/non-cardiovascular mortality (HR = 2.15; 95% CI = 1.43-3.24).

In conclusion, diabetic patients with depression face increased mortality that extends beyond cardiovascular causes. The authors suggested that in order 'to decrease the mortality burden for patients with comorbid diabetes and depression, [future] studies should examine interventions aimed at improving health behavior, medication adherence, and better control of medical comorbidities, in addition to optimal depression care. □

Comment on a paper:

Lin EHB, Heckbert SR, Rutter CM et al – Depression and Increased Mortality in Diabetes: Unexpected Causes of Death. *Ann Fam Med* 2009; 7:414-421