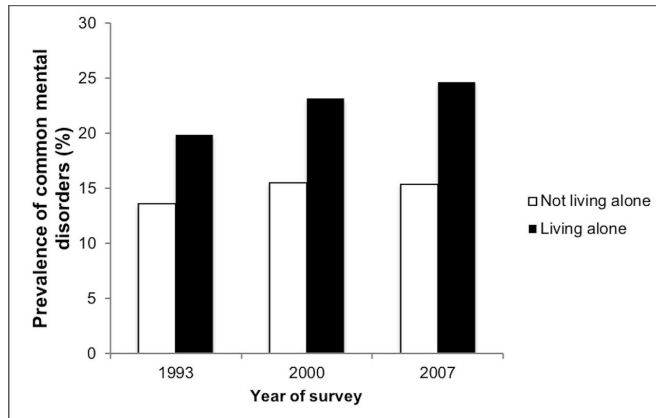


Mental disorders more common in people who live alone

1 May 2019



Prevalence of common mental disorders by living arrangement. Credit: Jacob et al., 2019

Living alone is positively associated with common mental disorders, regardless of age and sex, according to a study published May 1, 2019 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Louis Jacob from University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France, and colleagues.

The proportion of people living alone has increased in recent years due to population aging, decreasing marriage rates and lowering fertility. Previous studies have investigated the link between living alone and mental disorders but have generally been conducted in elderly populations and are not generalizable to [younger adults](#).

In the new study, researchers used data on 20,500 individuals aged 16-64 living in England who participated in the 1993, 2000, or 2007 National Psychiatric Morbidity Surveys. Whether a person had a common mental disorder (CMD) was assessed using the Clinical Interview Schedule-Revised (CIS-R), a questionnaire focusing on neurotic symptoms during the previous week. In

addition to the number of people living in a household, data was available on factors including weight and height, [alcohol dependence](#), [drug use](#), [social support](#), and loneliness.

The prevalence of people living alone in 1993, 2000, and 2007 was 8.8%, 9.8%, and 10.7%. In those years, the rates of CMD was 14.1%, 16.3%, and 16.4%. In all years, all ages, and both men and women, there was a positive association between living alone and CMD (1993 odds ratio 1.69; 2000 OR 1.63; 2007 OR 1.88). In different subgroups of people, living alone increased a person's risk for CMD by 1.39 to 2.43 times. Overall, loneliness explained 84% of the living alone-CMD association. The authors suggest that interventions which tackle loneliness might also aid the mental wellbeing of individuals living alone.

Jacob summarizes: "Living alone is positively associated with common [mental disorders](#) in the general population in England."

More information: Jacob L, Haro JM, Koyanagi A (2019) Relationship between living alone and common mental disorders in the 1993, 2000 and 2007 National Psychiatric Morbidity Surveys. *PLoS ONE* 14(5): e0215182. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215182

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