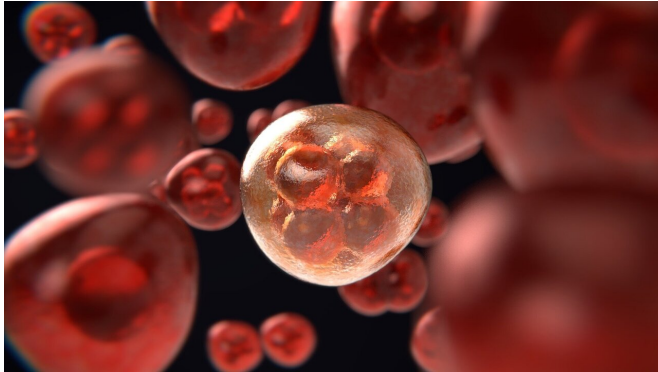


# Physical conditions linked to psychological distress in patients with cancer

18 February 2021



"Comorbidities often influence the choice and management of cancer treatment. These results suggest that they could also be important for patients' [mental health](#) in the months following diagnosis," said the first author Dafina Petrova, Ph.D., of the Andalusian School of Public Health, in Spain.

**More information:** *Psycho-Oncology* (2021).  
[DOI: 10.1002/pon.5632](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5632)

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Among patients with cancer, having additional physical comorbidities was linked with a higher risk of experiencing psychological distress. The finding comes from a *Psycho-Oncology* analysis of 2017 data from the National Health Survey of Spain.

The analysis included 484 patients who reported a [cancer diagnosis](#) and 484 matched controls without a history of cancer. Compared with controls, patients with cancer reported more physical comorbidities, including [chronic back pain](#), asthma, chronic bronchitis, urinary incontinence, prostate problems, and kidney problems. They also reported higher psychological distress and were more likely to have consulted a mental healthcare professional in the past year.

Thirty percent of patients with cancer reported significant psychological distress but only 10% had consulted a professional. Each additional physical comorbidity was associated with a 9% higher odds that patients with cancer would report having high [psychological distress](#) and a 21% higher odds that they would have consulted a mental healthcare professional.

APA citation: Physical conditions linked to psychological distress in patients with cancer (2021, February 18) retrieved 28 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-02-physical-conditions-linked-psychological-distress.html>

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