

# Depression and anxiety more common in heart failure than cancer patients

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Nearly one in four patients with heart failure is depressed or anxious, according to a study published during this week's Heart Failure Awareness Days. Patients with heart failure were 20% more likely to develop these mental health issues during the five years after diagnosis compared to those with cancer. The findings are published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*, a journal of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

"The treatment of mental illnesses in [cancer patients](#)—psycho-oncology—is long-established but similar services for [heart patients](#) (psycho-cardiology) are still in their infancy," said study author Dr. Mark Luedde of the Cardiological Group Practice, Bremerhaven, Germany. "Our study suggests that [heart failure patients](#) could benefit from greater support with psychological problems."

Heart failure affects around 65 million people worldwide<sup>2</sup> and is more deadly than some cancers.<sup>3</sup> The number of co-existing conditions in heart failure patients is also rising,<sup>4</sup> and they are connected with poorer quality of life.<sup>5</sup> This study

examined how often depression or anxiety occurred in the course of heart failure compared with various cancers.

The study used information from the nationally representative German Disease Analyzer database, which includes approximately 3% of outpatient practices. The researchers compared the combined incidence of depression and anxiety during the five years after a diagnosis of heart failure or cancer.

The retrospective analysis included adults with an initial diagnosis of heart failure, breast cancer, prostate cancer, or digestive organ cancer in 1,274 general practices between 2000 and 2018. This was a total of 96,772 patients with heart failure, 21,261 patients with breast cancer, 16,478 patients with prostate cancer, and 29,479 patients with cancer of the digestive organs.

Within five years after diagnosis, 23.1% of heart failure patients had developed depression or anxiety compared to 25.7%, 22.1%, and 15.0% of patients with breast, digestive, and prostate cancers, respectively.

When compared to overall cancer, heart failure patients had a significantly higher risk of developing depression or anxiety with a hazard ratio of 1.20 (95% confidence interval 1.18-1.23; p

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