

PTSD and other psychological traumas may increase risk of cardiovascular disease

People coping with psychological trauma have a heightened risk of developing cardiovascular disease, a large-scale study finds. Researchers used national health registers to identify 136,637 Swedish patients with no history of cardiovascular disease who were diagnosed with a stress-related disorder — a cluster of mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, triggered by acute trauma — from 1987 to 2013.

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In the patients' first year after being diagnosed, those with a stress-related disorder had a 64 percent higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease than their siblings without a mental health diagnosis, and a 70 percent higher risk than unrelated patients, the scientists report.

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How stress and other mental health conditions affect the heart remains a mystery. Previous studies have pointed to physiological mechanisms as well as lifestyle factors. It could be that heightened activity in a brain region called the amygdala, which plays a role in processing emotions, especially fear, triggers inflammation that leads to cardiovascular disease. And people with PTSD are more likely to smoke heavily, which increases their risk of developing heart disease.

Read full, original post: [People with stress disorders like PTSD are at higher risk of heart disease](#)