

HIPS/16/59 – Assessing the impact of major illness on the outcomes and complications of cardiovascular disease and diabetes: a national data linkage project

People with major clinical illness (such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder) have higher risks of chronic physical disease, particularly heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Long-term health outcomes may also be worse and there may be differences in the levels of physical healthcare provided. However, this is an understudied area, particularly in countries with universal healthcare access, including Scotland. In this study we will investigate, among patients with diabetes, stroke and heart attack, whether co-morbid major mental illness is related to adverse health outcomes, including death, first or recurrent stroke/heart attack and diabetic complications. We will also examine the extent to which differences in key processes of care (for example diabetes monitoring, admission to stroke unit following stroke and procedures to unblock coronary blood vessels after a heart attack) exist and whether they partly explain any disparities in outcomes. We will do this by linking together and analysing multiple Scottish national population-level routine health datasets. Study findings will: deepen our understanding of the interplay between mental and physical health; have implications for health services to ensure the needs of those with major mental illness are adequately and equitably met; and help direct future research in this area.