

Poster presentation

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## Somatic symptoms study: physical health of patients with mental illness

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### Background

Not only are those diagnosed with a mental disorder at greater risk of suffering from physical illness, but such health problems will often have extensive impact upon the psychological well-being and quality of life of these individuals. The principle objective of this study was to investigate whether psychiatric patients led a less healthy lifestyle, and experienced poorer physical health than the general population.

### Materials and methods

The study sample was obtained from the Western Australian community and consisted of 55 psychiatric patients, and a matched control group comprised of 1210 representatives of the general population. A comparative analysis of data relating to a selection of lifestyle practices and physical measurements of the individuals from either group was performed.

### Results

The psychiatric patients generally consumed a higher amount of saturated fat, exercised less, had a greater intake of cigarettes and alcohol, and had a larger body mass index and waist-to-hip ratio. Compared to the general population therefore, the psychiatric patients were more often associated with behaviours that carry high health risks.