

Mind and Body

Mental illness and physical health: The Facts



Twenty percent of adults are affected by some form of mental disorder every year. Depression and anxiety disorders (such as panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder) are the most common mental illnesses. The remainder are affected by psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and other diagnoses.

Looking after our physical health is important for everyone, but it can be an extra challenge for people affected by mental illness.

- ⓘ People with mental illness have much poorer physical health than the general population.
- ⓘ People with a mental illness have a mortality rate 2.5 times higher than the general population.
- ⓘ Half of all Australians living with a chronic physical health condition experience depression or anxiety.
- ⓘ 90% of people with a mental illness have a chronic physical health problem such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart or respiratory disease.
- ⓘ 64% of people with a mental illness are concerned about weight management. Other concerns include poor diet and physical inactivity.
- ⓘ The most common forms of treatment for mental illness are medication and psychological therapy. Community support and help for families are also important.
- ⓘ 61% of carers of people with a chronic health condition experience depression.
- ⓘ Almost 1 in 5 people with a mental illness spend more than \$100 a month on medication.
- ⓘ The smoking rate among people with a mental illness (31%) is almost double that of the general population, contributing further to poor health and higher mortality.
- ⓘ Over half (56%) cannot afford private health insurance.
- ⓘ 41% of people with a mental illness cannot afford dental care.
- ⓘ Over half (54%) are not able to afford all treatments recommended by their doctor, and just under half (42%) do not always fill scripts for medication they are prescribed because of the expense.

Statistics are based on the results of anonymous surveys completed on the SANE website and published in SANE's Research Bulletin series. *SANE Research Bulletins* provide 'real world' evidence and commentary on mental health issues, by asking people affected by mental illness to share their views on topics that affect their lives.

How do I find out more?

SANE Australia produces a range of easy-to-read publications and multimedia resources on mental illness. For more information about this topic see:

SANE Guide to Healthy Living

A comprehensive guide to healthy living for people with a mental illness. The Guide provides information and tips on a healthier lifestyle and where to find support. Contact the SANE Helpline 1800 18 SANE (7263) or visit the SANE Bookshop at www.sane.org for more details and to order.

Other useful SANE Factsheets on this topic available from the website:

- ⓘ Healthy Living
- ⓘ Mind and Body: Checks for your physical health
- ⓘ Smoking and mental illness