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Depression, Anxiety can increase the risk of heart diseases: Study

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The study published in the journal Health Psychology showed that cancer was found as an exception to conditions impacted by depression and anxiety.



Being anxious or depressed can increase risks for heart disease and stroke, the same as smoking and obesity, according to a new study, that underscores the importance of treating mental health conditions.

According to IANS, the findings showed that people with high levels of anxiety and depression are at 65 per cent higher risk for a heart condition, 64 per cent for stroke, 50 per cent for high blood pressure and 87 per cent for arthritis.

"These increased odds are similar to those of participants who are smokers or are obese," said lead author Andrea Niles, from the University of California San Francisco (UCSF).

However, the study published in the journal Health Psychology, showed that cancer was found as an exception to conditions impacted by depression and anxiety.

"Our findings are in line with a lot of other studies showing that psychological distress is not a strong predictor of many types of cancer," said co-author Aoife O'Donovan from the UCSF.

O'Donovan stressed on the need to stop attributing cancer diagnoses to histories of stress, depression and anxiety.

The team also found that symptoms such as headache, stomach upset, back pain and shortness of breath increased exponentially in association with high stress and depression.

Odds for headache, for example, were 161 per cent higher in this group.

"Anxiety and depression symptoms are strongly linked to poor physical health, yet these conditions continue to receive limited attention in primary care settings, compared to smoking and obesity," Niles said.

The results of the study underscore the "long-term costs of untreated depression and anxiety," O'Donovan noted.

For the study, the team looked at the health data of more than 15,000 older adults over a four-year period.