

Prostate cancer and mental health



EQUALLYWELL

On average, people living with mental health conditions **die 11 years earlier than the rest of the population.**

Two-thirds of these deaths are **preventable**¹ by accessing freely available services.

We can change this!

The health inequity

People with mental health conditions are **5 times more likely to die prematurely** from prostate cancer.¹

For people with mental health conditions, prostate cancer causes:

- Over 460 premature deaths^a per year.¹
- And over 300 (6 per week) of these deaths are potentially preventable.¹



The main known risk factors for prostate cancer are age, and family history.

Prostate cancer screening saves lives^b

If detected early, survival rates are more than 95%.²



People with mental health conditions are:

- **34% less likely** to receive surgery after diagnosis³
- **17%-40% less likely** to complete initial screening for prostate cancer.^{4,5}

Initial testing for prostate cancer involves a blood test called a PSA test (prostate specific antigen test).

Men are encouraged to speak to their doctor about a risk assessment so they can make an informed choice about prostate cancer testing. PSA testing every year may be recommended for men over 50 years old.



Access to quality physical health care is a basic human right!

Keep asking until you and the people you support get the care they deserve.

This factsheet is part of a series on specific health risks for people living with mental health conditions. It draws on Equally Well's national monitoring report, *Unequally Unwell*, and other relevant research.

Every day in Australia, **46 people** with mental health conditions **die of preventable** physical health conditions.¹

We can all help to improve health and save lives of people living with mental health conditions



Looking after yourself

- **Know** your [risk factors](#).
- **Ask** your GP about screening options if you are over 50 years old, have a family history of prostate cancer, or if you have [symptoms](#).
- **Equip** yourself with the [Taking Charge of your Care resource](#) to plan the physical health care you want.



Helping others

- **Ask** friends or family about their health, and when they last saw their GP.
- **Advise** about prostate cancer screening options available.
- **Assist** by supporting them to arrange and attend GP appointments.
- **Share** this factsheet in places such as your workplace, health services, libraries, community spaces, or with friends and colleagues.



Workplace & network

- **Promote** staff awareness of higher prostate cancer risks for people with mental illness.
- **Encourage** proactive screening for men, male-assigned non-binary people, transgender men, and intersex people over 50 years old.
- **Equip** your service [by providing resources](#) about prostate cancer survivorship.
- **Seek** to coordinate mental and general healthcare.

Further information

The Unequally Unwell report¹ examined the premature mortality and preventable deaths for people living with mental health conditions, defined as the number of deaths in a section of the population above that expected based on the total population death rates (as defined by OECD⁶).

About prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men. Some prostate cancers grow slowly and may not cause problems, while others can grow quickly and need treatment.²

More information is available from [Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia](#), or the [Australian Prostate Centre](#) website.

About Equally Well

Equally Well is a collective of over 100 organisations committed to the physical health of people living with mental health conditions. The Equally Well initiative is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

Links *[click or scan]*



[Unequally Unwell
Summary Report](#)



[Full Report](#)



[Equally Well](#)

^a Premature is defined as between the age of 15 to 74 years.

^b Please note, this information is not a substitute for professional medical advice.



Factsheet #7

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4. Tuesley KM, Jordan SJ, Siskind DJ, Kendall BJ, Kisely S. Colorectal, cervical and prostate cancer screening in Australians with severe mental illness: retrospective nation-wide cohort study. Aust N Z J Psychiatry. 2019;53:550-8.
5. Solmi M, Firth J, Miola A, et al. Disparities in cancer screening in people with mental illness across the world versus the general population: prevalence and comparative meta-analysis including 4 717 839 people. Lancet Psychiatry. 2020;7:52-63.
6. OECD. "Excess mortality", in Health at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators. Paris: OECD Publishing; 2021.