

## Relationship Between Chronic Mental Health Symptoms and Immune Health

This literature review examines the relationship between immune health and mental health symptoms. More specifically, this review examines whether certain mental health disorders, chronic physical disorders, and auto immune disorders tend to co-occur. The author predicts that the current research will show that several mental illnesses are associated with poor immune health. The literature reveals that chronic medical disorders, such as coronary heart disease and diabetes have a high correlation with mental health disorders such as depression and schizophrenia. People with depression or schizophrenia are at higher risk to be diagnosed with heart disease or depression. Research suggests that in the process of fighting infection, our immune system releases cells that flood the blood stream with proteins and these proteins lead to high inflammatory responses. Studies indicate that individuals have varying levels of these proteins, and that having a higher level suggests a higher risk for developing chronic mental or physical illness. Other research suggests that those who have PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) or who have been exposed to traumatic stressors are at higher risk for developing gastrointestinal disease, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, musculoskeletal disorders and many other disorders. Research also the findings suggests that anti-inflammatory drugs used in conjunction with anti-psychotic treatments could be more effective in reducing symptoms of psychosis. Knowledge of this association would allow treatments to be tailored to the patient, based on whether immune deficiencies are present, in addition to the mental illness. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies and utilizing control groups in the studies.