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Depression and the Risk of Autoimmune Disease: a Prospective Study On a Nationwide Representative Sample

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Background: Depression is associated with various inflammatory-related physical conditions, such as cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases. Yet, little is known about the association between depression and autoimmune diseases.

Objectives and Aims: To examine the association between depression and risk of autoimmune disease, investigating the temporal and dose-response nature of these relationships.

Methods: A prospective study including approximately 1.1 million people is conducted using linked Danish registries. We have identified 145,217 participants with depression between 1995 and 2012. Survival analyses are used to estimate the relative risk of autoimmune disease among those with, compared to without, depression. Analyses are adjusted for covariates.

Results: Preliminary analyses indicate an association between depression and an increased risk of several autoimmune diseases, with a potential dose-response correlation. Final results are still in progress.

Conclusion: Depression seems to be associated with increased risk of the onset of a range of autoimmune diseases. As such, depression may play a role in the etiology of certain autoimmune conditions.