# THE NEGLECTED ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SCHIZOPHRENIA AND BONE FRAGILITY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSES

<u>Behnaz Azimi Manavi\*</u><sup>1</sup>, Kayla B Corney<sup>1</sup>, Mohammadreza Mohebbi<sup>1</sup>, Shae E Quirk<sup>1</sup>, Amanda L Stuart<sup>1</sup>, Julie A Pasco<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>, Jason M Hodge<sup>1,2</sup>, Michael Berk<sup>1,2,5,6,7</sup>, Lana J Williams<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Deakin University, IMPACT – the Institute for Mental and Physical Health and Clinical Translation, School of Medicine, Barwon Health, Geelong, Australia. <sup>2</sup>Barwon Health, Geelong, Australia. <sup>3</sup>Department of Medicine-Western Health, The University of Melbourne, St Albans, Australia. <sup>4</sup>Department of Epidemiology and Preventative Medicine, School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. <sup>5</sup>Department of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia. <sup>6</sup>Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, Parkville, Australia. <sup>7</sup>Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health, Center for Youth Mental Health, Parkville, Australia

\*Contact information: bazimimanavi@deakin.edu.au

## Introduction

Osteoporosis is a pressing public health concern (Riggs, 1995, Bone); and it is often not detected until a fracture occurs (Garnero, 2004, J Musculoskelet Neuronal Interact). Fracture can result in reduced quality of life, short-term morbidity, higher disability rate and related hospital admissions (Pasco, 2017, J Cachexia Sarcopenia Muscle & Otmar, 2013, J Men's Health) as well as heavy financial burden (2021, Lancet Healthy Longev). Thus, identifying subgroups of the population who may have an increased risk of bone fragility is imperative for prevention and anticipating health care needs. Schizophrenia, a severe mental disorder, is associated with increased risk of medical comorbidity (Janssen, 2015, Gen Hosp Psychiatry), possibly including osteoporosis (Kishimoto, 2012, Curr Opin Psychiatry). Thus, we aimed to determine whether schizophrenia is associated with bone fragility.

## **Methods**

The research question and inclusion/exclusion criteria were developed using a PECO structure:

Population: Adult populations aged 18 years or older

Exposure: Schizophrenia recorded in medical records, DSM-IV/5 or the ICD

**Comparison:** Only studies with an appropriate comparison group

#### Figure 2: Forest plot and funnel plot for BMD at the femoral neck Meta-analysis plot (Random effects)

	Schizophernia			Contr	ol		SMD	Weight	
Study name	Ν	Mean	SD	Ν	Mean	SD		95% CI	(%)
Female									
Jung et al. 2006 (T-score)	21	81	.91	23	.21	1.15		-0.96 [ -1.59, -0.33]	8.47
Jung et al. 2011 (T-score)	93	-1.02	1.4	60	1	.92		-0.74 [ -1.08, -0.41]	13.85
Koçer et al. 2011 (T-score)	5	66	.99	16	.16	1.08		— -0.74 [ -1.78, 0.29]	4.39
Doknic et al. 2011 (Z-score)	14	.29	.22	24	.52	.17		-1.19 [ -1.90, -0.47]	7.27
Liang et al. 2019 (g/cm2)	83	.78	.11	40	.82	.07		-0.40 [ -0.78, -0.02]	12.91
							•	-0.72 [ -1.00, -0.45]	
Male									
Jung et al. 2006 (T-score)	30	02	1.06	34	.4	.87		0.43 [ -0.93, 0.07]	10.63
Jung et al. 2011 (T-score)	136	73	1.06	65	.05	1.04	-	-0.74 [ -1.04, -0.43]	14.50
Koçer et al. 2011 (T-score)	9	66	.99	15	.16	1.08		0.76 [ -1.61, 0.10]	5.75
Doknic et al. 2011 (Z-score)	12	.29	.22	11	.52	.17	<b>B</b>	-1.12 [ -2.01, -0.23]	5.46
Keely et al. 1997 (g/cm2)	16	.98	.04	16	1.08	.04	<b>_</b>	-2.44 [ -3.38, -1.50]	5.05
Liang et al. 2019 (g/cm2)	67	.78	.11	29	.82	.07		0.40 [ -0.84, 0.04]	11.72
							-	-0.89 [ -1.42, -0.36]	
							•	-0.78 [ -1.03, -0.53]	
							-3 -2 -1 (	)	



### Figure 3: Forest plot and funnel plot for BMD at the lumbar spine

	Met	Meta-analysis plot (Random effects)								
	Schizophrenia				Control			SMD	Weight	
Study name	Ν	Mean	SD	Ν	Mean	SD		95% CI	(%)	
Female										
Chiang et al. 2020 (T-score)	20	0021	1.38	28	.05	1.26	-	0.04 [ -0.61, 0.53]	5.43	
Jung et al. 2006 (T-score)	21	13	1.08	23	.74	1.01	-=	-0.82 [ -1.44, -0.20]	5.37	
Jung et al. 2011 (T-score)	93	03	1.9	60	41	1.08		0.23 [ -0.09, 0.56]	5.67	
Koçer et al. 2011 (T-score)	5	6	1.4	16	.2	1.15		-0.64 [ -1.66, 0.39]	4.77	
Lin et al. 2019 (T-score)	46	29	1.31	31	0	1.2	-	0.23 [ -0.68, 0.23]	5.56	
Delucia et al. 2011 (7 acces)	4.4	20	0	04	00	0	_		4.00	

#### Bias assessment plot (Funnel plot, trim & fill)

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Outcome: Bone fragility assessed by (I) BMD, (II) Bone quality, (III) Fracture, (IV) Bone turnover markers

Full-text published observational studies (cohort, cross-sectional and/or case-control) were eligible for inclusion in this study. Eligible studies were not restricted based on the sex or nationality of the sample, publication year or language.

A search strategy was developed and implemented for the electronic databases.

Two reviewers independently determined the eligibility of studies according to pre-determined criteria, and assessed the methodological quality using the National Institute of Health (NIH). We used the 14-item checklist for observational cohort and crosssectional studies, and the 12-item checklist for case-control studies in this systematic review, respectively.

Due to the dearth of available studies and heterogeneity, regarding the bone quality and bone turnover markers outcomes, only studies that examined BMD and fracture were selected for the metaanalyses. As potential heterogeneity was anticipated, all analyses were conducted in Stata 17 using a restricted maximum likelihood random-effects model. Hedge's g was considered the main effect size for the meta-analyses for continuous variable (BMD) with the odds ratio (OR) being considered the main effect size for the binary outcome (fracture-yes).

The protocol for this review has been registered with PROSPERO (CRD42020171959).

Heterogeneity was assessed by calculating I<sup>2</sup> and H<sup>2</sup> values. An I<sup>2</sup> score of 25% was considered as low, 50% as medium and 75% as high heterogeneity. Heterogeneity was further explored via subgroup analyses, including sample size, year of publication, methodological quality, and site (for fracture only). Small-study effects were assessed using funnel plots and regression-based Egger and Begg tests. When publication bias was suspected, contourenhanced funnel plots were generated, a trim-and-fill analysis by Duval and Tweedie was performed and adjusted results with the trim-and-fill method were reported.

## **Results**

Figure 1: Flow diagram for included studies and reasons for full-text screening study selection



-4 -2 Lower BMD



#### Schizophrenia with fracture Control with fracture OR Weigh with 95% CI (%) Study name Yes No Female Bishop et al. 2004 (Fracture rate) 45 6.75 [ 0.78, 58.50] 0.29 Bishop et al. 2004 (Total fracture) 12 34 45 15.88 [ 1.97, 128.16] 0.31 Bolton et al. 2017 (MOF) 1.24 [ 0.77, 1.99] 3.71 19 4.562 51,186 Bolton et al. 2017 (Hip) 3.14] 1.72 1.271 54.477 1.39 [ 0.62, 185 Tsai et al. 2014 (MOF) 1.677 117.083 1.61 [ 1.52, 1.71] 9.01 28.658 Tsai et al. 2014 (NON-MOF) 1.07] 8.97 1,228 116 454 1.01 [ 0.94, Jung et al. 2011 (Any fracture) 4.87 [ 1.60, 14.86] 1.00 24 Howard et al. 2007 (Hip) 100 1.67 [ 1.27, 2.19] 6.21 110 16.241 29.779 Chu et al. 2022 (Hip) 1.86 [ 1.16, 3.00] 3.69 25 2.003 54 8.058 Chu et al. 2022 (Vertebral) 1.51 [ 1.09, 2.07] 5.52 Chu et al. 2022 (Wrist) 0.95 [ 0.57, 1.59] 3.35 18 2.010 76 8.036 1.40 [ 1.10, 1.79] 6.59 Chu et al. 2022 (Newly diagnosed fracture) 89 1.939 257 7.855 1.45 [ 1.22, 1.73] Male 6.10 [ 1.79, 20.79] 0.85 Jung et al. 2011 (Any fracture) 105 62 31 - 3 Bolton et al. 2017 (MOF) 19 172 4.562 51.186 1.24 [ 0.77, 1.99] 3.71 1.39 [ 0.62, Bolton et al. 2017 (Hip) 3.14] 1.72 185 1.271 54.477 Tsai et al. 2014 (MOF) 1.677 28.658 1.61 [ 1.52, 1.71] 9.01 Tsai et al. 2014 (NON-MOF) 1.07] 8.97 1,228 29 107 116 454 1.01 [ 0.94, 1.67 [ 1.27, 2.19] 6.21 Howard et al. 2007 (Hip) 100 Chu et al. 2022 (Hip) 25 8.058 1.86 [ 1.16, 3.00] 3.69 2,003 54 1.51 [ 1.09, 2.07] 5.52 Chu et al. 2022 (Vertebral) 53 1 975 142 7 970 0.95 [ 0.57, 1.59] 3.35 Chu et al. 2022 (Wrist) 18 2,010 1,939 257 7.855 1.79] 6.59 Chu et al. 2022 (Newly diagnosed fracture) 89 1.40 [ 1.10, 1.41 [ 1.19, 1.67] 1.43 [ 1.27, 1.61] 1 4 16 64 Higher odds of incident fracture for people with schizophrenia



The meta-analyses revealed that people with schizophrenia had lower BMD at the lumbar spine [standardised mean

#### Figure 4: Forest plot and funnel plot for fracture Meta-analysis plot (Random effects)



difference (SMD) -0.74, 95% CI -1.27, -0.20; Z=-2.71, p=0.01] and at the femoral neck (SMD -0.78, 95% CI -1.03, -0.53; Z=-6.18, p≤0.001). Also observed was a higher risk of fracture (OR 1.43, 95% CI 1.27, 1.61; Z=5.88, p≤0.001). Following adjustment for publication bias, the association between schizophrenia and femoral neck BMD (SMD -0.63, 95% CI -0.97, -0.29) and fracture (OR 1.32, 95% CI 1.28, 1.35) remained.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This systematic review comprised 52,246 individuals with schizophrenia aged between 18-90 years and 4,001,143 controls aged between 18-83 years. In aggregate, our results indicate that people with schizophrenia have lower BMD, poorer bone quality and higher rates of bone turnover and fracture than individuals without schizophrenia.

Significantly increased risk of bone fragility was observed in people with schizophrenia. This association was independent of sex, participant number, methodological quality and year of publication. Specifically, people with schizophrenia have lower BMD, particularly at the femoral neck, a higher risk of fracture, poorer bone quality and increased bone turnover. Since osteoporosis is often indetectable before fracture and is associated with multiple detrimental consequences, identifying those at risk of bone fragility is a priority. Further research is needed to evaluate the aetiology of bone fragility in this population and recognise modifiable risk factors such as lifestyle or medications to reduce the potential risk for this patient group. Importantly, there is a need to develop guidelines for preventing risk factors and predicting fracture in people with schizophrenia.



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