**WORRIED SICK**

**Anxiety and depression ‘increases your risk of dying from cancer by a THIRD’**

**BY NICK MCDERMOTT, HEALTH EDITOR**

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Analysis of 16 UK studies showed death rates from certain tumours, including bowel, prostate and pancreatic, were higher among the most distressed

**DEPRESSED people are a third more likely to die of cancer, new findings suggest.**

Adults struggling with anxiety or low moods see their risk of being killed by a tumour rose by 32 per cent, a study found.

And for some cancers the chances of death soar by 286 per cent.

Those who are most distressed are at greater risk of cancer of the bowel, prostate, pancreas and oesophagus and of leukaemia.

Experts from University College London followed more than 160,000 men and women who were initially free from cancer.

By the end of the decade-long study, published in the British Medical Journal, 4,353 went on to die from the disease.

After examining levels of psychological distress – such as anxiety or depression – they found it had a significant impact.

Those with the greatest levels of unhappiness were more likely to be killed by cancer.

Dr David Batty, of UCL, said: “The results show that compared with people in the least distressed group, death rates in the most distressed group were consistently higher for cancer of the bowel, prostate, pancreas and oesophagus and for leukaemia.”

The data shows the most depressed saw their risk of bowel cancer rise 84 per cent, prostate 142 per cent, pancreas 176 per cent, throat by 159 per cent and leukaemia by 286 per cent.

Researchers said the study did not definitely prove distress increased the chances of cancer death.

Instead, the researchers said it may mean undiagnosed cancers could cause the depression.

But further analysis of the data, excluding those who died in the first five years of the study, found the link between distress and cancer death remained.

Dr Batty added: “Our findings contribute to the evidence that poor mental health might have some predictive capacity for certain physical diseases but we are a long way off from knowing if these relationships are truly causal.”

Previous evidence links anxiety and depression to increased rates of cardiovascular disease.

More than 330,000 Brits are diagnosed with cancer each year, with around 160,000 dying.

Professor Peter Johnson, from Cancer Research UK, said: “This interesting study suggests a link between a person’s mental health and their risk of dying from cancer.

“But we need more research to see if this is really the case, or if anxiety and depression are linked to known cancer risks such as smoking, overweight and high alcohol intake.

“Better mental health may be another way in which we can reduce our risk of developing cancer, and this deserves serious attention.”