

Life style risk factors and somatic health among patients with schizophrenia in Greenland

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2

Greenland

- The world's largest island, located between the Arctic Ocean and North Atlantic Ocean¹.
- 57.000 inhabitants, 90% of Inuit origin. 10% of Danish origin¹.
- Infrastructure depends on airplanes and boats. No road connects cities or settlements¹.
- The capital is Nuuk, with 17.000 inhabitants¹.



Healthcare system

- All healthcare in Greenland is free of charge and has equal access³.
- Five regional hospitals in Sisimiut, Ilulissat, Qaqortoq, Aasiaat, and Nuuk³.
- Health stations in small cities and settlements³.
- For some specialty treatments, patients are flown to Nuuk, Iceland, or Denmark³.
- The healthcare system is in close collaboration with the Danish healthcare system³.



Psychiatry

- One psychiatric department with one acute ward with 12 beds⁴.
- One day-treatment center and one outpatient clinic⁴.
- In rural areas, local psychiatric nurses and telepsychiatric consultations⁴.
- One child- and adolescent day-treatment center in Nuuk. Consultants visits once a year in regional areas⁴.
- Forensic psychiatric department in Denmark with 16 beds⁵.



Psychiatric patients

- Prevalence of schizophrenia, ICD-10, F20 in Greenland is 1%⁶.
- Prevalence of somatic comorbidities is limited⁶.
- All psychiatric patients aged > 18 in Nuuk were offered a health check in 2021.
- Data extraction from 104 patients with an ICD-10, F20-29.
- Sixty-eight men and thirty-six women. Mean age of 40 years.



Somatic health and risk factors

- 84% daily smokers. 55% are daily smokers in the general population⁷.
- 68% frequent abuse of cannabis. 3.8% have daily use in the general population⁷.
- 28% obese, BMI >30 kg/m². 32% of women and 24% of men in the general population are obese⁷.
- Women have a significantly higher BMI than men (31 vs. 26 kg/m², p=0.001).
- 10 % hypertension, blood pressure > 140/90 mmHg. 16% of the general population is treated with antihypertensives⁸.
- 6% hemoglobin A1c-levels > 49 mmol/mol. 2.9% of the general population have type 2 diabetes⁹.
- Only a few in the study population have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiac diseases, lipid imbalances, or thyroid diseases.

Clinical implications

- Concerningly high prevalence of risk factors smoking, cannabis abuse, and obesity, higher than the general population but similar to other Inuit populations¹⁰.
- Smoking tobacco and abusing cannabis suggest self-medication or insufficient psychiatric treatment.
- Only a few are diagnosed with cardiovascular disease and COPD. Still several risk factors for developing cardiovascular- and pulmonary diseases are present, and with increasing age, the patients are at high risk for developing severe somatic diseases.
- Psychiatric patients often have reduced compliance to treatment and limited contact with the healthcare system¹¹. Therefore a more outreach approach will be needed to reduce morbidity and mortality for these patients.



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