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Media release

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Schizophrenia drugs can increase the risk of diabetes

People with schizophrenia have a higher incidence of diabetes than the general population, and that risk is multiplied with some of the medicines used to treat schizophrenia, according to Professor Joseph Proietto, writing in this month's *Australian Prescriber*.

Professor Proietto of Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, Melbourne, says the link between taking antipsychotic medicines and developing diabetes is clear, although the reasons are not fully understood.

It is known that some schizophrenia medicines cause weight gain, and that being overweight contributes to the risk of developing diabetes. Professor Proietto says that the weight gain experienced as a side-effect of some medicines may contribute to a person getting diabetes.

However, not all people on these medicines put on weight – and some people whose weight stays constant still develop diabetes. The medicines may cause diabetes by affecting insulin levels in the body.

People with schizophrenia are encouraged to talk to their doctor about their medication and about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It is important that they do not stop taking their medicines because they are concerned about diabetes.

For more information about your medicines contact *Medicines Line* on 1300 888 763 Monday to Friday between 9am and 6pm EST for the cost of a local call. *Medicines Line* gives confidential information about prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, herbal and natural therapies and is provided by the NPS.

For the complete article visit the *Australian Prescriber* web site www.australianprescriber.com. *Australian Prescriber* is an independent review journal providing critical commentary on therapeutic topics for health professionals. It is published by National Prescribing Service (NPS), an independent, non-profit organisation funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. NPS works to improve the health of all Australians through Quality Use of Medicines.

For further information or expert commentary about this article please contact Miriam Fletcher at NPS by telephone on (02) 8217 8700 (bh) or 0419 618 365 (media mobile) or by email at mfletcher@nps.org.au.

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National Prescribing Service Limited | ACN 082 034 393 | ABN 61 082 034 393
Level 7/418A Elizabeth Street Surry Hills NSW

PO Box 1147 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 | Phone: 02 8217 8700 | Fax: 02 9211 7578 | net: www.nps.org.au