

# Study finds link between childhood physical abuse and arthritis

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Adults who had experienced physical abuse as children have 56 per cent higher odds of osteoarthritis compared to those who have not been abused, according to a new study by University of Toronto researchers.

Source: University of Toronto ([news](#) : [web](#))

University of Toronto researchers investigated the [relationship](#) between self-reported childhood physical abuse and a diagnosis of [osteoarthritis](#) (OA). After analyzing representative data from the 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey, the researchers determined a significant association between childhood physical abuse and osteoarthritis in [adulthood](#).

The study is published in the November issue of the journal *Arthritis Care & Research*.

Osteoarthritis is an often debilitating chronic condition that affects millions of adults. "We found that 10.2 per cent of those with osteoarthritis reported they had been physically abused as children in comparison to 6.5 per cent of those without osteoarthritis," says lead author Esme Fuller-Thomson of U of T's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and Department of Family and Community Medicine. "This study provides further support for the need to investigate the possible role that childhood abuse plays in the development of chronic illness."

Co-author Sarah Brennenstuhl, a doctoral student at the University of Toronto, stated that, "We were surprised that the significant association between childhood physical abuse and osteoarthritis persisted even after controlling for major potentially confounding factors such as obesity, physical activity levels as well as age, gender, income and race."

According to Fuller-Thomson, one important avenue for future research is to investigate the pathways through which [arthritis](#) may develop as a consequence of childhood [physical abuse](#).

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