

Almost half of depression in adults starts in adolescence

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(Medical Xpress) -- A new study by research psychologists at Bangor and Oxford Universities show that half of adults who experience clinical depression had their first episode start in adolescence. In fact, the most common age to see the start of depression is between 13-15 years-old.

'[Depression](#) used to be a problem that first surfaced in middle-aged people' says Professor Mark Williams of Oxford University who led the study with Professor Ian Russell and Rebecca Crane of Bangor University. 'In recent decades, however, researchers began to find that patients were first becoming depressed at an increasingly young age, a trend that has contributed to depression becoming one of the most pressing health issues across the world'.

As part of the study, they assessed the age at which people first became depressed and its links to later mental health problems and suicidal feelings. The study involved 275 people who had suffered repeated bouts of depression. All were carefully assessed to determine at what age they had first experienced the combination of symptoms that would indicate [clinical depression](#). In the article published this month in the *Journal of Affective Disorders* the researchers showed that 48 percent of these patients had first suffered the illness before the age of 18 years. In fact, the most common age of their first episode of depression was 13-15 years.

'These results are important because depression is a problem that tends to return. If you've been depressed once, then you have a roughly 50:50 chance of becoming depressed again. If you have become depressed twice or more, then this risk rises to 70-80 percent.

Yet the good news is that there are things we can do to prevent it happening. Talking therapies such as [Cognitive Therapy](#) and Mindfulness-based

Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) can have a major impact on the type of [recurrent depression](#) that starts early in life, and researchers are starting to examine how best to prevent depression before it becomes a life-long problem.

Rebecca Crane of the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at Bangor University adds: 'The Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy course offers people who are vulnerable to recurrent depression the opportunity to engage in a training process which builds skills in recognising and responding wisely to the first signs of depression.'

'Over repeated episodes of depression unhelpful habitual patterns of thinking and feeling are established. Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy teaches participants to recognise and respond to these patterns in new ways'. 'Here at Bangor University we offer mindfulness classes to the general public. These courses are open to everyone and so are not specifically aimed at people with recurrent depression - they do however develop the skills which research has demonstrated is relevant to [people](#) who are vulnerable to depression.'

Provided by Bangor University

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