

Remission from depression much slower in adults who were abused in childhood

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Remission from depression is delayed in adults who have experienced childhood physical abuse or parental addictions, a new study by University of Toronto researchers has found. The study is published this week in the journal *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*.

many studies, adult [depression](#) has been characterized by HPA axis hyperactivity," says co-author and recent PhD graduate, Sarah Brennenstuhl. "This link is an important avenue for future research."

University of Toronto investigators examined a range of factors associated with remission in a sample of 1,128 depressed Canadian adults, drawn from the National Population Health Survey.

More information: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-013-0814-8

Depressed individuals were followed every other year until remission occurred, for up to 12 years. "Our findings indicated that most people bounce back. In fact, three-quarters of individuals were no longer depressed after two years" reported co-author and Professor Emeriti Tahany M. Gadalla. However, not everyone recovered at the same rate.

Provided by University of Toronto

"Early adversities have far-reaching consequences. The average time to recovery from depression was 9 months longer for adults who had been physically abused during their childhood and about 5 months longer for those whose parents had addiction problems" says lead author Esme Fuller-Thomson, Sandra Rotman Endowed Chair in the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.

"Numerous studies have shown that [childhood abuse](#) and parental addictions make individuals more vulnerable to depression," says co-author and MSW graduate Marla Battiston. "Our research highlights that these factors also slow the recovery time among those who become depressed."

Although this study could not determine why [childhood](#) adversities are associated with poor depression outcomes, the researchers speculate that negative experiences may interrupt the normal development of the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis, which affects stress regulation. "In

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