



# Estimation of the Relationship between Childhood Trauma and Adult Psychiatric Disorders

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## ABOUT THE STUDY

Childhood trauma is a significant risk factor for the development of psychiatric disorders in adulthood. Many studies have shown that individuals who have experienced trauma in childhood are at an increased risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse disorders. However, the relationship between childhood trauma and adult psychiatric disorders is complex and multifaceted, and researchers are still working to fully understand the nature of this relationship.

Childhood trauma can take many different forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence. The impact of trauma on the developing brain can be profound and long-lasting. Children who experience trauma may have altered brain development, which can lead to difficulties in emotional regulation, memory processing, and cognitive functioning. These changes in the brain can make individuals more vulnerable to mental health problems in later life.

Research has consistently shown that childhood trauma is associated with an increased risk of developing a range of mental health disorders in adulthood. A meta-analysis of 27 studies found that individuals who experienced childhood trauma were more than twice as likely to develop depression in adulthood than those who did not experience trauma. Similarly, a review of 50 studies found that individuals who experienced childhood trauma were at an increased risk of developing anxiety disorders, PTSD, and substance abuse disorders.

One of the most well-established links between childhood trauma and adult psychiatric disorders is the association between trauma and PTSD. PTSD is a severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, or physical or sexual assault. PTSD is characterized by intrusive memories, flashbacks, avoidance behaviors, and hyperarousal symptoms. Childhood trauma is a significant risk factor for the development of PTSD in adulthood. A meta-analysis of 51 studies found that individuals

who experienced childhood trauma were almost three times more likely to develop PTSD than those who did not experience trauma.

Childhood trauma is also associated with an increased risk of developing substance abuse disorders in adulthood. Individuals who experience trauma in childhood may use substances as a coping mechanism to deal with the emotional pain and distress associated with trauma. Substance abuse disorders can develop as a result of long-term substance use, and can have severe negative impacts on an individual's physical and mental health. A meta-analysis of 24 studies found that individuals who experienced childhood trauma were at an increased risk of developing substance abuse disorders in adulthood.

The relationship between childhood trauma and depression is also well-established. Depression is a common mental health disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest in activities, and changes in appetite, sleep, and energy levels. A meta-analysis of 26 studies found that individuals who experienced childhood trauma were more than twice as likely to develop depression in adulthood than those who did not experience trauma.

The exact mechanisms by which childhood trauma leads to the development of psychiatric disorders in adulthood are not fully understood. However, there are several theories that have been proposed. One theory is that childhood trauma leads to changes in the brain's stress response system, which can make individuals more vulnerable to developing mental health problems in adulthood. Another theory is that childhood trauma can lead to negative self-beliefs and low self-esteem, which can increase the risk of developing depression and anxiety.

It is also important to note that not all individuals who experience childhood trauma will develop psychiatric disorders in adulthood. Resilience, social support, and access to mental health resources can all play a protective role in mitigating the negative effects of childhood trauma. However, it is essential that individuals who have experienced childhood trauma receive appropriate mental health support.

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