

Childhood physical abuse linked to peptic ulcers

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Victims of childhood physical abuse are more than twice as likely to develop ulcers than people who were not abused as children, according to a new study from researchers at the University of Toronto.

"We found a strong and significant association between individuals who were abused during childhood and those who were diagnosed with peptic ulcers later in life," says lead author Esme Fuller Thomson, Professor and Sandra Rotman Chair at U of T's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. "I originally thought the link would be explained by factors such as [stress](#), [obesity](#), smoking or [alcohol abuse](#) – characteristics that are highly associated with peptic ulcers – but even after adjusting for sixteen known variables, those who had been physically abused in childhood had 68% higher odds of peptic ulcers than their non-abused peers."

Co-author Jennifer Bottoms, a graduate of the Masters of Social Work program at U of T, underscores the dual relevance of the research.

"These findings not only underline the importance of preventing childhood physical abuse," says Bottoms, "they also highlight the need to screen adults who have experienced childhood abuse as they are at risk for negative health outcomes."

Professor Thomson's study appears online in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Researchers used data from a representative community sample of 13,069 adult Canadians. More than 1000 reported being physically abused by someone close to them before they turned 18 and 493 said they had been diagnosed with [peptic ulcers](#) by a health

professional.

Provided by University of Toronto

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