

# New study links binge eating to strained mother-daughter relationships

March 6 2013

---



Dalhousie researchers link binge eating among university-aged women with strained mother-daughter relationships in a recent study published in the journal *Eating Behaviors*.

[Binge eating](#) is a [disordered eating](#) behaviour that involves eating a large amount of food in a short period of time. Binging often induces [physical](#)

[discomfort](#) along with [feelings of guilt](#). It's associated with negative outcomes such as weight gain, weight-related illnesses, [mental health problems](#) and poor self-image. Prior research on binge eating focused on the individual binge eater. This new study illuminates the impact interpersonal relationships have on individuals who are binging on food.

Researchers studied 218 mother-daughter pairs. The daughters, all in university, were assessed for socially prescribed perfectionism: when a person perceives that others have high expectations of them and expect them to be perfect. The mothers were assessed for [psychological control](#): when a person is demanding and controlling of others. This was done using existing assessment mechanisms.

Findings suggest that young women who feel they need to be perfect and are exposed to pressures can develop feelings of sadness. Binge eating becomes a short-term coping mechanism during these times of unhappiness. The research can have clinical implications on the assessment and treatment of individuals who binge eat. Academics, clinicians, counsellors and families will have a better understanding of external factors that can lead to binge eating and other disordered eating behaviours.

"We can't just rely on an individual to change, we have to address the wider context within which their problem is occurring. In light of our research, it may be unfair to locate this problem within the mother or the daughter. It's occurring in the transaction between them." – Dr. Simon Sherry, co-author, associate professor, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience.

The paper is titled "[Testing the Perfectionism Model of Binge Eating in Mother-Daughter Dyads: A Mixed Longitudinal and Daily Diary Study](#)."

Provided by Dalhousie University

Citation: New study links binge eating to strained mother-daughter relationships (2013, March 6)  
retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-links-binge-strained-mother-daughter-relationships.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--