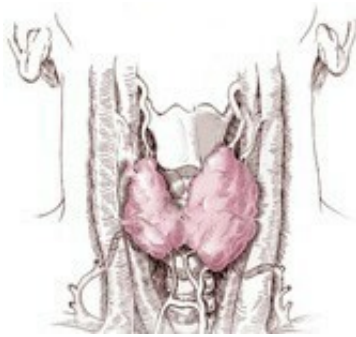


# Childhood abuse linked to later thyroid problems for women

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Stress hormone in 'fight-or-flight' reaction may be involved, researcher suggests.

(HealthDay)—Women who suffered physical abuse during childhood are at increased risk for thyroid problems, according to a new study.

"We found a significant association with thyroid disorders for women who were abused during childhood," lead author Esme Fuller Thomson, professor and chair at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Social Work, said in a university news release.

"We originally thought the link would be explained by factors such as daily stress, smoking or [alcohol abuse](#) —characteristics associated with both childhood physical abuse and thyroid disorders—but even after adjusting for 14 potential explanatory factors, women who had been physically abused in childhood had 40 percent higher odds of thyroid

disorders than their non-abused peers," Fuller Thomson said.

Researchers analyzed data from about 13,000 Canadian adults. More than 1,000 of the women reported being physically abused before they turned 18 and about 900 said they had been diagnosed with a thyroid disorder.

The study was published online July 29 in the *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*.

Long-term effects of childhood [physical abuse](#) on the [thyroid](#) "may be due to the way early traumas change the way an individual reacts to stress throughout life," study co-author Loriena Yancura, an associate professor in the family and consumer sciences department at the University of Hawaii, said in the news release.

"One important avenue for future research is to investigate potential dysfunctions in the production of the 'fight-or-flight' hormone, cortisol, among survivors of abuse," she added.

**More information:** The American Thyroid Association has more about [thyroid diseases](#).

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