

Women who were physically abused during childhood more likely to be obese

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Women with a history of childhood physical abuse are more likely to become obese adults, according to a new study by University of Toronto researchers.

Results indicate that women who were physically abused in childhood were more likely to be obese than women from non-abusive homes.

"After adjusting for age and race, childhood [physical abuse](#) was associated with 47% higher odds of obesity for women" says lead author Esme Fuller-Thomson, Professor and Sandra Rotman Endowed Chair in the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. "Among men, obesity wasn't associated with childhood physical abuse."

"We had anticipated that the association between childhood physical abuse and obesity among women would be explained by factors including depression and anxiety, adult socio-economic position, [alcohol abuse](#), and other childhood adversities, such as having a parent addicted to drugs or alcohol," says study co-author and doctoral student Deborah Sinclair. "However, even after taking into account all these factors, women from physically abusive families still had 35% higher odds of obesity."

The study could not determine the reason for the relationship between childhood physical abuse and women's obesity. "It is unclear why childhood physical abuse is associated with [adult obesity](#) among women but not men; it may reflect gender differences in coping mechanisms,"

says study co-author and doctoral candidate Sarah Brennenstuhl.

More information: www.karger.com/Article/Pdf/354609

Provided by University of Toronto

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