

# Children are significantly more likely to develop PTSD if the mother is already afflicted

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A Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) study indicates that children are more likely to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) if their mother is already afflicted.

In the study published in the *Journal of Depression & Anxiety*, while fewer than 10 percent (8.4 percent) of the [mothers](#) were suffering from PTSD, more than a fifth (21 percent) of their [children](#) presented PTSD symptoms. Children who developed PTSD symptoms also had more psychosomatic complaints such as constipation, diarrhea and headaches.

"This study reinforces the existing body of knowledge regarding the importance of evaluating and treating parental responses in time of stress," the researchers explain.

"Parents are often the key to understanding children's responses generally and specifically in times of stress. The study also highlights the close interrelations between 'body and soul' among children and adults."

In the study, some 160 mothers of preschool children were interviewed about symptoms exhibited by their children and their own responses during Operation Cast Lead. More than 750 rockets were fired into Southern Israel from Gaza from December 2008 to January 2009.

Working with the Preschool Psychiatric Unit at Soroka University

Medical Center, the BGU researchers examined the relationship between PTSD symptoms and socio-demographic, family attributes and psychosomatic symptoms among children exposed to Grad missile attacks in Beer-Sheva, Israel.

Professors Danit Shahar and Drora Fraser in the University's Department of Epidemiology and Health Services Evaluation led the study. Other researchers included Dr. Ilan Harpaz-Rotem and Dr. Robert Pietrzak from Yale University and Dr. Nomi Werbeloff from the Department of Psychiatry, Sheba Medical Center, Ramat-Gan.

Provided by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

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