

# Study highlights gender gap in mental ill-health during early adolescence

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The gender gap in mental ill-health and wellbeing widens from childhood into early adolescence, a University of Liverpool led study suggests.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and government-funded research, led by Dr Praveetha Patalay from the University's Institute of Psychology, Health and Society, identified several risk factors for [girls](#) and boys experiencing high symptoms of depression by the time they are 14.

Some of the [risk factors](#) identified include being overweight and bullied by peers, and for girls being less well-off and having higher cognitive ability scores in childhood, according to the findings based on a detailed questionnaire with a same of 9,553 boys and girls across the UK.

## A public health priority

The research, using data from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) managed by The Centre for Longitudinal studies, is tracking the progress of people born in 2000 into adulthood. The results add to the growing evidence that teenage girls are particularly vulnerable to mental health difficulties.

Dr Patalay, said: "Our research shows that girls from families in the bottom two quintiles of household income are 7.5% more likely to be

depressed at 14 than girls from the highest income families, but the same pattern was not found in boys.

"We found a substantial link between being overweight and being depressed. Rates of overweight and mental ill-health are increasing in [childhood](#), and they both have enormous consequences through our lives. Tackling these two health issues should be a public [health](#) priority."

**More information:** Mental ill-health and wellbeing at age 14 – Initial findings from the Millennium Cohort Study Age 14 Survey: <https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwj1186czZbbAhWDXRQKHfglCW8QFggnMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cls.ioe.ac.uk%2Fshared%2Fget-file.ashx%3Fid%3D3422%26itemtype%3Ddocument&usg=AOvVaw18qJTzkJVOODtpQPvoX91B>

Provided by University of Liverpool

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