

Gender affects the correlation between depression and weight in children and adolescents

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The results of a large community-based study have shown that the probability of major depressive disorder in children and adolescents with

high, low, or normal body mass index differs according to gender. Underweight boys and overweight girls have an increased risk of depression, according to the study published in *Childhood Obesity*.

Seyed-Ali Mostafavi, Tehran University of Medical Sciences and a large team of Iranian researchers coauthored the article entitled "Gender Determines the Pattern of Correlation between Body Mass Index and Major Depressive Disorder among Children and Adolescents: Results from IRCAP Study." The Iranian Children and Adolescents' Psychiatric Disorders Study (IRCAP) included BMI results for more than 25,000 youths and compared the likelihood of a diagnosis of depression among the subgroups of girls and boys, dividing them into categories of underweight, [normal weight](#), and overweight.

"There has been some disagreement in the literature about the nature of the relationship between obesity and depression among children and adolescents. Mostafavi and colleagues generated a large Iranian population-based sample and determined that obesity was correlated with depression among boys, but not girls, after controlling for likely confounders. The large sample adds confidence to the findings," says *Childhood Obesity* Editor-in-Chief Tom Baranowski, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX. "This relationship needs to be assessed in other countries to assess the extent to which this finding varies by culture, and what it may be about culture that influences this relationship. Weight management interventions for boys should anticipate their possible depression."

More information: Mohammad Reza Mohammadi et al, Gender Determines the Pattern of Correlation between Body Mass Index and Major Depressive Disorder among Children and Adolescents: Results from Iranian Children and Adolescents' Psychiatric Disorders Study, *Childhood Obesity* (2019). [DOI: 10.1089/chi.2018.0323](https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2018.0323)

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