

Housing insecurity in childhood linked to anxiety, depression

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Housing insecurity in childhood is associated with anxiety and

depression during childhood and with depression during adulthood, according to a study published online June 20 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Ryan Keen, Ph.D., from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues examined whether [childhood housing insecurity](#) is associated with later anxiety and [depression symptoms](#) in a prospective cohort study including individuals aged 9, 11, and 13 years at baseline. From January 1993 to December 2015, participants were assessed up to 11 times.

The researchers found that compared with those who never experienced housing insecurity, children who experienced housing insecurity had higher standardized mean baseline anxiety and [depression](#) symptom scores (anxiety: 0.49 versus 0.22; depression: 0.20 versus -0.06). Higher anxiety symptom scores and higher depression symptom scores were seen for individuals who experienced childhood housing insecurity (standardized mean difference: 0.21 and 0.25 for fixed and random effects, respectively, for anxiety; 0.18 and 0.26 for fixed and random effects, respectively, for depression). Childhood housing insecurity was also associated with higher depression symptom scores in adulthood (standardized mean difference, 0.11).

"Our results underscore the importance of interventions that optimize services and resources to ensure safe and secure housing for all children," the authors write.

More information: Ryan Keen et al, Prospective Associations of Childhood Housing Insecurity With Anxiety and Depression Symptoms During Childhood and Adulthood, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.1733](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.1733)

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