

Study suggest female teens with family history of mood disorder prone to weight gain

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Female offspring of parents with mood disorders have increased z body mass index (BMI) compared with controls of unaffected parents starting at about 12 years of age, according to a study published online Oct. 19 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Nitya Adepalli, from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and colleagues conducted a community-based, single-center, acceleration cohort study of youth at [familial risk](#) for [mood disorders](#) and controls with annual follow-ups from Jan. 1, 2014, to Dec. 31, 2022, to examine the age at which youth with familial risk for mood disorders began to diverge in weight from controls. The study included 394 unaffected female and male offspring of parents with or without a mood disorder.

The researchers found that youth at familial risk for mood disorders showed no overall difference in body weight from controls. However, there was a sex-specific difference observed, with a rapid peripubertal increase in body weight in females at familial risk versus controls, leading to significantly increased zBMI at 12 years and older ($\beta = 0.57$), independent of socioeconomic status, prematurity, or birth weight. There was no difference seen for males at familial risk versus controls at any age.

"Further work should consider the association of early intervention on protecting against development of mood and weight conditions in this high-risk group," the authors write.

"Additionally, education on the association between mental and [physical health](#) with thoughtful consideration of the stigma associated with mental health conditions and increased [body weight](#) would provide a great opportunity to empower youth to take charge of their own health."

More information: Nitya Adepalli et al, Developmental Trajectory of

Body Weight in Youths at Risk for Major Mood Disorders, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.38540](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.38540)

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