

The Association Between Childhood Trauma, Depression and Eating Behaviour in Young Adults in a Community-Based Study

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Aim: The aims of this study were to investigate the individual associations between childhood trauma, depression and binge eating. Additionally, to search for a relationship between the adherence to a Mediterranean diet with these three conditions. **Background:** Evidence suggests that childhood trauma increases the risk of both, depressive and eating disorders. Furthermore, individuals suffering from binge eating also experienced more depressive symptoms, making interaction between these two conditions probable. Researchers revealed that depressive symptoms are related to more unhealthy food choices and therefore a higher Body Mass Index (BMI). Additionally, a positive association has been found between not only binge eating severity but also childhood abuse with the degree of obesity. It has been suggested that dietary improvement such as a high adherence to a Mediterranean diet would lower mean binge eating scores and would reduce depression symptoms. **Participants and setting:** Cross-sectional community-based study with a study sample of 331 participants. **Method:** Linear regression analysis was used to test associations between childhood trauma, depression, binge eating, BMI and diet. **Results:** All forms of childhood trauma showed significant associations with depressive symptom severity in adulthood, the greatest association was found for emotional abuse ($\beta = 0.504$, $p < 0.001$), followed by emotional neglect ($\beta = 0.410$, $p < 0.001$). All forms of childhood trauma except physical abuse were significantly associated with binge eating in adults, the greatest effect was found for emotional abuse ($\beta = 0.349$, $p < 0.001$). Cross-sectionally, depressive symptom severity was significantly associated with binge eating in adults ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$). High adherence to a Mediterranean diet did not reveal a significant association with either childhood trauma, depression, or binge eating. **Conclusion:** Our results showed a statistically significant association between childhood trauma and depression, between childhood trauma and binge eating, and between depression and binge eating in young adults. The results in our study suggest that a higher adherence to a Mediterranean diet does not lower the scores of either depression or binge eating. **Relevance to clinical practice:** Our results suggest that childhood trauma, depression and binge eating should be evaluated together. **Keywords:** Childhood trauma, depression, binge eating, Mediterranean diet

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