



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA FOR DEPRESSED WOMEN**

Childhood sexual abuse is an important risk factor for women with depression, according to a Black Dog Institute study.

These women are more likely to:

- Develop depression at a younger age
- Engage in deliberate self-harm behaviour/or suicide attempts
- Experience physical or sexual assault in adulthood
- Receive a diagnosis of lifetime panic disorder

The study, titled 'Implications of Childhood Trauma for Depressed Women: An Analysis of Pathways from Childhood Sexual Abuse to Deliberate Self-Harm and Revictimization', examined the data collected in relation to 125 women with depressive disorders.

One of the conclusions from the study is that women with a childhood sexual abuse history constitute a subgroup of patients who may require tailored interventions to combat depression.

The study revealed that of those with a history of childhood sexual abuse, only 11 (32 percent) had received counselling or therapy to address the abuse.

These women participants with a history of child sexual abuse were asked to rate the current impact of that experience on their adult life.

Four (11.8 percent) women reported that the abuse had no impact on their adult life, three (8.8 percent) reported a slight impact, 13 (38.2 percent) reported a moderate impact, seven (20.6 percent) said that the abuse had a severe impact and seven (20.6 percent) reported that it had an extreme impact.

Significantly, more women with a history of childhood sexual abuse had attempted suicide or had engaged in self-injurious behavior, both in the past and recently.

Parental conflict, emotional abuse and neglect were considered to be vulnerability factors that heightened the risk for childhood physical and sexual abuse.

One other important finding is that parental conflict appears to be an important factor that renders children vulnerable to sexual abuse by perpetrators outside the home.

“The risk is further compounded by the high likelihood that child sex offenders target children from families with problems,” the study showed.

Full details of the study are shown on the Black Dog Institute website:

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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