

# Emotional Abuse and Neglect's Effect On Clinical Dimensions of Depression



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## Abstract

- The purpose of this study is to examine men who self-reported emotional abuse or emotional neglect during their childhood and to see if there is any relationship to their symptoms of depression.
- The study included a total of 414 individuals who experienced emotional abuse or emotional neglect.
- Analytical comparisons were made to see if there were any significant relationships between their reports of abuse and depressive symptoms.
- Overall emotional abuse was significantly correlated with having higher scores of somatic complaints, depressive affect, overall depressive scale score, and lower positive affect. Emotional neglect was significantly correlated with having higher somatic complaints, higher overall depressive scale score, and lower positive affect.
- Emotional neglect and Emotional abuse were significantly correlated with Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale
- Emotional neglect did not have any significant relationship with depressive affect.

## Introduction

- Cultures, generational learning, social stigma, and biases have all continued the lack of providing emotional support to male youth.
- Stigma has led to a disproportionate number of men dealing with mental illness compared to those seeking treatment, thus most men knowingly have a mental illness but are not proactive in their treatment and care.

## Purpose

- The purpose of this study is to identify any significant relationships between their reports of emotional abuse, emotional neglect, and depressive symptoms.

## Hypothesis

- Men with reports of emotional abuse and emotional neglect will have higher scores of depressive symptoms.

## Literature Review

- Emotional neglect and emotional abuse have both been commonly overlooked in previous research.
- Yet one important finding in the research was that emotional trauma was positively correlated to higher depressive symptoms.
- Emotional neglect has been defined as emotional unresponsiveness, unavailability, and neglect during parent and child interaction, whereas emotional abuse is seen as constant swearing, yelling, criticism, the humiliation of a child, unreasonable demands, and unfair treatment due to specific characteristics.
- Each form of abuse can be easily overlooked enough though it can cause significant impact on children and on adults who experienced if during their childhood.

## Methods

### Research Design

- A secondary analysis of the (MIDUS Refresher): Biomarker Project, 2012-2016.
- The original Study examined linkages among sociodemographic, psychosocial, and biological variables to recognize older life profiles of morbidity and mortality in a series of projects

### Sample

- A subsample of 413 men ages of 26-78 (48% of the original sample).
- Mean Age= 54.26 (SD=14.09).
- 77% were white and 12.8% were black and/or African American.
- The median income of participants was 58,000.

### Measures

- Experiences of emotional neglect and emotional abuse were assessed by the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire.
- Emotional neglect and emotional abuse were categorized in this study by utilizing a binary indicator.
- Participants answering yes to at least 1 item of emotional abuse or emotional neglect were categorized as emotionally neglected or emotionally abused during childhood.
- Depression was measured by using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD).
- The depression scale utilized Likert scales and assessed the participant's depressive symptoms within the last week
- Mann-Whitney U tests were used to examine if there was the difference in depressive affect, somatic complaints, positive affect, and overall depressive scale between participants with and without emotional abuse and emotional neglect experiences during their childhood.

## Variables

### Independent Variables:

- Emotional abuse
- Emotional neglect

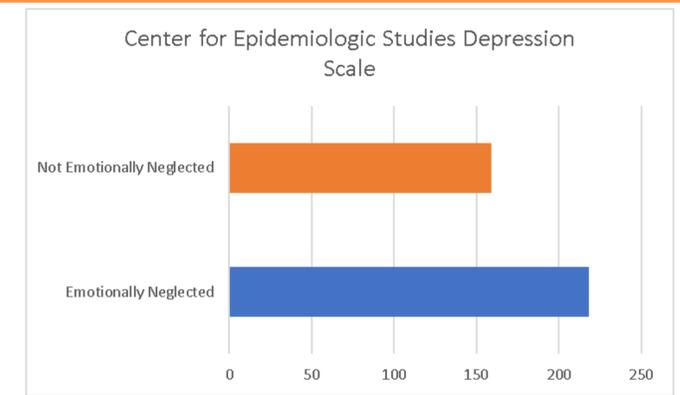
### Dependent Variables:

- Depressive affect
- Positive affect
- Somatic complaints
- Overall depression Score

## Results

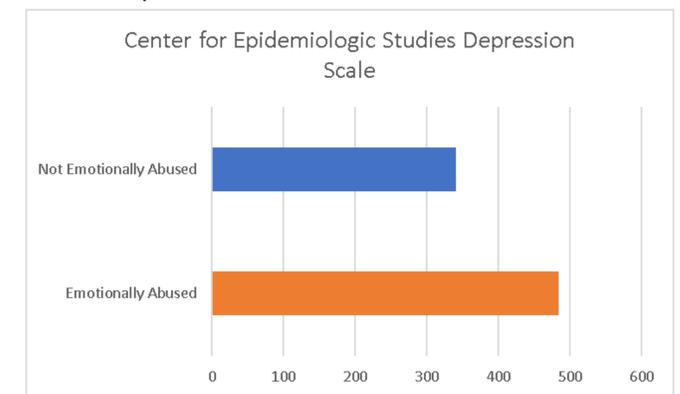
### Emotional neglect's relationship with depressive symptoms:

- Those who stated that they had experienced emotional neglect during childhood experienced significantly higher scores of somatic complaints, higher depressive scale score, and lower positive affect.
- The only singular analysis that did not have significant results was the dependent variable of depressive affect in those who experienced emotional neglect.
  - Those who experienced emotional neglect during childhood did not have significantly higher scores in their depressive affect.



### Emotional abuse's relationship with depressive symptoms:

- Those who stated that they experienced emotional abuse during childhood had significantly higher scores of depressive symptoms in adulthood.
  - Specifically, these individuals showed significantly higher scores of somatic complaints, higher depressive scale score, and lower positive affect.



## Discussion

### Strengths

- Current research found statistically significant relationships between independent and dependent variables
- The current research focused on types of abuse that is not commonly focused on.

### Limitations

- Though the sample size did provide significance there is importance that future research utilizes a larger sample size to ensure validity.
- Questionnaires were self-administered which could be misinterpreted by the participants.

### Implications for Practice and Policy

- These findings signify the importance of providing emotional support to male children, which could make a huge impact for reducing depression in adult men
- Future research can further support the need for parenting classes and interventions how to emotionally supporting male youth