

## **Patterns of Adolescent Depression to Age 20: The Role of Maternal Depression and Youth Interpersonal Dysfunction**

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Patterns of Adolescent Depression to Age 20: The Role of Maternal Depression and Youth Interpersonal Dysfunction

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### **Abstract**

Considerable research has focused on youth depression, but further information is needed to characterize different patterns of onset and recurrence during adolescence. Four outcome groups by age 20 were defined (early onset-recurrent, early-onset-desisting, later-onset, never depressed) and compared on three variables predictive of youth depression: gender, maternal depression, and interpersonal functioning. Further, it was hypothesized that the association between maternal depression and youth depression between 15 and 20 is mediated by early-onset depression and interpersonal dysfunction by age 15. Eight hundred sixteen community youth selected for depression risk by history (or absence) of maternal depression were interviewed at age 15, and 699 were included in the 5-year follow-up. Controlling for gender, early onset and interpersonal dysfunction mediated the link between maternal depression and late adolescent major depression. Different patterns for males and females were observed. For males maternal depression's effect was mediated by early onset but not interpersonal difficulties, while for females maternal depression's effect was mediated by interpersonal difficulties but not early onset. Maternal depression did not predict first onset of major depression after age 15. The results suggest the need for targeting the impact of maternal depression's gender-specific effects on early youth outcomes, and also highlight the different patterns of major depression in youth and their likely implications for future course of depression.