

CHRONIC ILLNESS & PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL DEPRIVATION

PEOPLE LIVING WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS ARE AT GREATER RISK OF SUFFERING FROM MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, IN PARTICULAR DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY. THE IMPACT OF ANY CHRONIC ILLNESS DEPENDS ON BOTH THE ILLNESS AND THE INDIVIDUAL BUT CAN BE EXTREMELY DEBILITATING AND MAY HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON SOMEONE'S LIFE. ADOLESCENCE IS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE PERIOD IN TERMS OF HORMONAL, PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. DISRUPTION OF THIS PHASE DUE TO CHRONIC ILLNESS MAY BE PARTICULARLY PROBLEMATIC. ONE FACTOR KNOWN TO AGGRAVATE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IS THAT OF INSUFFICIENT SOCIALISATION. CHRONICALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS MAY EXPERIENCE AN EXTREME FORM OF THIS WHEREBY THEY LACK TYPICAL SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ARE OFTEN DISCONNECTED FROM SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. THE AIM OF THIS STUDY WAS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PRESENCE OF CHRONIC ILLNESS PREDICTED PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, AND TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF SOCIAL DEPRIVATION.

• UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY

THE UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY STUDY IS A LONGITUDINAL STUDY WHICH HAS BEEN RUNNING SINCE 2009.



EVERY YEAR INFORMATION IS COLLECTED ABOUT INDIVIDUALS FROM OVER 30,000 HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS THE UK.

THIS STUDY USED A SNAPSHOT OF DATA FROM THE UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY STUDY - THE 2020 CALENDAR YEAR DATASET.

• METHODS

- 229 PARTICIPANTS COMPLETED A LENGTHY SURVEY
- PARTICIPANTS WERE ADOLESCENTS AGED 16-21 YEARS
- DATA PERTAINING TO CHRONIC ILLNESS, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION WERE SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS
- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA, SUCH AS AGE AND ETHNICITY WERE ALSO SELECTED
- A CORRELATION ANALYSIS, LINEAR REGRESSION AND MEDIATION ANALYSIS WERE PERFORMED

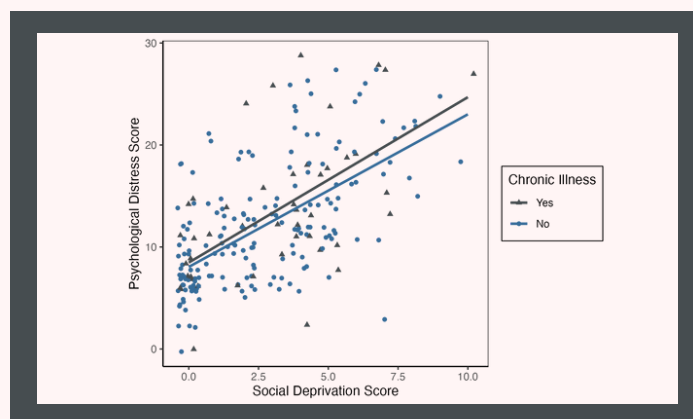
• RESULTS

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION SCORES WERE HIGHER IN CHRONICALLY ILL ADOLESCENTS THAN IN THEIR HEALTHY COUNTERPARTS.

IN-KEEPING WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH, CORRELATION ANALYSIS CONFIRMED THAT AS SOCIAL DEPRIVATION SCORES INCREASED, SO TOO DID PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS SCORES, AS SHOWN IN THE GRAPH.

IN LINE WITH EXPECTATIONS CHRONIC ILLNESS WAS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS.

SOCIAL DEPRIVATION DID NOT MEDIATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRONIC ILLNESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS.



ALTHOUGH CHRONIC ILLNESS WAS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, SOCIAL DEPRIVATION DID NOT EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRONIC ILLNESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS. HOWEVER, CORRELATION ANALYSIS IDENTIFIED A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIAL DEPRIVATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS FOR ADOLESCENTS, IRRESPECTIVE OF CHRONIC ILLNESS. THIS OUTCOME SUGGESTS THAT INCREASED PROVISIONS TARGETING SOCIAL DEPRIVATION ARE NECESSARY FOR ALL ADOLESCENTS. IT ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR INCREASED MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE PRIORITISING PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE ALONGSIDE PHYSICAL CARE. THIS SHOULD EXTEND BEYOND HEALTHCARE SETTINGS TO SETTINGS SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES.

• CONCLUSION

THIS STUDY DETERMINED THAT CHRONIC ILLNESS PREDICTS PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN ADOLESCENTS AND CONCLUDED THAT SOCIAL DEPRIVATION DID NOT EXPLAIN THIS RELATIONSHIP. HOWEVER, STUDIES WITH A GREATER NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ARE WELCOMED TO VERIFY THESE FINDINGS. FURTHER RESEARCH IS ALSO INVITED TO IDENTIFY FACTORS WHICH MAY EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRONIC ILLNESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS. FINALLY, THE FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL DEPRIVATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR IMPROVED PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR ALL ADOLESCENTS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT RESOURCES, PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE

