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Nexis search: menstruation, Bristol

Words – 490

Sentences - 22

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| The Times (London)  January 4, 2011 Tuesday  Edition 1;  National Edition  Girls who mature early are at greater risk of depression when they reach their teens  **BYLINE:** Sam Lister  **SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 12  **LENGTH:** 522 words  Girls who start having periods at a younger age are at greater risk of suffering symptoms of depression in adolescence, research suggests.  A long-term study involving more than 2,000 girls shows that those who matured earlier were more likely to have mood swings and more prone to distress by their early teens.  Girls who started their periods after the age of 13½ had the lowest levels.  The mean age at which the girls, a cohort from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, started menstruating was 12½ years.  Researchers from the University of **Bristol** and the University of Cambridge said that the link between the timing of the first period and depressive symptoms suggested the need for greater awareness and support from schools and families.  Carol Joinson, the lead researcher, said the work supported earlier, smaller studies which suggested that later maturation may be protective against psychological distress.  "The transition into puberty is a critical developmental period, associated with many biological, cognitive and social changes," Dr Joinson said.  "These can include increased conflict with parents, the development of romantic relationships, changes in body image and fluctuating hormone levels.  Early maturing girls may feel isolated, and faced with demands which they are not emotionally prepared for."  The authors said that other explanations such as the "stressful change" hypothesis were not supported by the findings.  This theory proposes that puberty itself is a stressful event and that all girls will experience some level of distress at the time of the first period which then fades over time.  However the Avon research showed a higher level of depressive symptoms for early developers than for other groups.  These symptoms persisted into mid-adolescence.  Another theory is that a girl experiencing an "off-time" maturation start, one which is out of sync with peers, might suffer more distress.  The research, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, involved an examination of the association between the onset of **menstruation** and depressive symptoms at the ages of 10½, 13 and 14.  Researchers found that girls who started their periods early (before the age of 11½ years) had the highest levels of depressive symptoms at the ages of 13 and 14.  Other possible contributory factors, such as absence of a father, money problems in the family and body mass index were also included in the analysis.  Dr Joinson said it was not clear from the study whether early **menstruation** is associated with persistent adverse effects on emotional development beyond mid-adolescence.  The researchers pointed out that it is possible that girls who mature later may eventually experience similar levels of psychological distress to those who mature earlier.  "If girls who reach puberty early are at greater risk of psychological problems in adolescence, it may be possible to help them with school and family-based programmes aimed at early intervention and prevention," Dr Joinson concluded.  'They can face demands for which they are not emotionally prepared'   |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |

**SUBJECT:** ADOLESCENTS (91%); RESEARCH (90%); DEPRESSION (90%); FAMILY (89%); PSYCHOLOGY (89%); PSYCHIATRY (78%); RESEARCH REPORTS (78%); CHILDREN (75%); EXPERIMENTATION & RESEARCH (73%); MENTAL ILLNESS (73%); COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (70%)