

Influences of Perceived Social Support on Adolescent Depressive Symptoms and Educational Attainment

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Abstract

This study uses data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health to examine the relationship between perceived social support and depressive symptoms in a sample of black, Hispanic and white adolescents. This study found that family social support, teacher support, and to a smaller extent peer support were associated with mental health outcomes in adolescence. The results suggest that the perception by adolescents that support from their family, peers and teachers is low helps to explain some variation in adolescent depressive symptoms. An additional aim of this study was to examine the relationship between depressive symptoms in adolescence and educational attainment. The findings show that depressive symptoms during adolescence do predict higher odds of dropping out, even after social support variables were added into the model. This suggests that social support does not help to alleviate the educational consequences associated with depression.