

University study finds link between tantrums and ADHD

University of Edinburgh has found in a recent study that pre-school children who struggle to control emotions and behaviour have more symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at age seven.

The research discovered that children internalised their sadness and worries around the age of seven as a result. This is the first study of links between early behaviour and emotion regulation and school age mental health. It is hoped that the research might allow for tailored support to be developed into preventative care before mental health issues arise.

[Dr Aja Murray](#), of the University of Edinburgh's School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, who led the study, said: "Emotion regulation skills are acquired from early in life and are thought to strengthen gradually over childhood. Children, however, acquire these skills at different rates and slower acquisition may serve as a marker for neurodevelopmental and mental health issues. Our findings suggest that monitoring trajectories of emotion regulation over development could help identify which children are at risk of mental health issues."

The research analysed data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study

following the lives of 19,000 children born in 2000-02.

Findings showed that a tendency to have extreme emotional responses and slower development in the ability to regulate those emotions was significantly associated with ADHD symptoms, internalising symptoms, and conduct problems in both male and female children at age seven.