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Intergenerational Socioeconomic Mobility and Adult Depression: The CONSTANCES Study

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ABSTRACT

Socioeconomic mobility from childhood onwards may predict depression risk in adulthood. Using data from the nationally representative CONSTANCES study in France (2012-2014, n = 67,057), we assessed the relationship between intergenerational socioeconomic mobility and adult depression (Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression scale, ≥ 16 in men, ≥ 20 in women) and antidepressant use. Socioeconomic position was ascertained by occupational grade (childhood: maternal and paternal measures prior to age 15 years combined; adult: participant own). Data were analyzed using logistic regression models adjusted for sociodemographic characteristics, parental history of psychiatric disorders and suicide, health behaviors and chronic health problems. Compared to participants who had persistently high socioeconomic circumstances, those who experienced other socioeconomic trajectories had elevated levels of depression (multivariate Odds Ratios: upward mobility: 1.21, intermediate socioeconomic position: 1.28, downward mobility: 1.66, persistently low socioeconomic position: 1.82). Downward mobility and persistently low socioeconomic position were also associated with elevated odds of antidepressant use (multivariate Odds Ratios: 1.24 and 1.36 respectively). In supplementary analyses, socioeconomic mobility was more strongly associated with depression in women than in men and in younger participants (18-29 years) than other age groups. Factors that contribute to depression risk and socioeconomic inequalities in this area appear to play already in childhood; this should be acknowledged by clinicians and policymakers.

KEYWORDS: Childhood; Depression; Lifecourse epidemiology; Socioeconomic inequality; Socioeconomic mobility

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