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Alexithymia as a Mediator of the Relationship between Child Sexual Abuse and Psychological  
Distress in Adolescence: A Short-term Longitudinal Study

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Abstract

Background: Understanding factors influencing mental health of sexually abused teenagers is essential to orient treatment with this vulnerable population. The purpose of this study was to explore alexithymia as a mediator of the relationship between child sexual abuse and psychological distress using a representative sample of teenagers, while considering gender as a potential moderator.

Methods: Teenagers participating in the Quebec Youths' Romantic Relationships Survey completed measures evaluating a history of child sexual abuse and alexithymia at baseline while psychological distress was evaluated 6 months later.

Results: A moderated mediated model revealed a partial mediation effect of alexithymia in the relationship between child sexual abuse and psychological distress. Gender acted as a moderator

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