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Parental Deprivation
and
Endogenous Depression

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
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Abstract

Twenty endogenous depressives, twenty reactive depressives, twenty schizophrenics and twenty randomly selected normal subjects were studied to compare familial features, incidence of actual and perceived parental deprivation and incidence of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. The major hypothesis was that endogenous depressives would suffer more parental deprivation than other groups including reactive depressives, previous research having not generally differentiated between the two types of depressives. Data was gathered from an interview which was based on a questionnaire. Endogenous depressives were found to be more likely to have had both parents absent from the home for some period, and were more likely to have felt as children that their fathers did not love them and to continue to believe this as adults. Normals were found to have a lower incidence of suicidal thoughts and suicidal attempts than the other three groups. Although results seldom reached statistical significance reactive depressives tended to be less parentally deprived on almost all variables. Results suggest that while in the past research related to parental deprivation has focused primarily on the mother-child relationship the area of father-child relationships may be at least equally important.

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