

# Pessimism, Trauma, Risky Sex: Covariates of Depression in College Students

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**Objective:** To explain variance in depression in students (N = 648) using a model incorporating sexual trauma, pessimism, and risky sex. **Method:** Survey data collected from undergraduate students receiving credit for participation. **Results:** Controlling for demographics, a hierarchical linear regression analysis [Adjusted  $R^2 = .34$ ,  $F(5,642) = 67.38$ ,  $P < .001$ ] suggests that higher pessimism ( $t = 16.05$ ,  $P < .001$ ), more sexual trauma ( $t = 3.76$ ,  $P < .001$ ), and more

risky sex ( $t = 3.40$ ,  $P < .001$ ) were associated with increased depression. Not being in a relationship ( $t = 3.54$ ,  $P < .001$ ) and being unemployed ( $t = 3.10$ ,  $P < .01$ ) also predicted more depression in students. **Conclusions:** Results identify key access points for the treatment of depression in students.

**Key words:** depression, risky sexual behaviors, pessimism, sexual trauma, college student

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