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Teens who listen to music a lot are at high risk of depression Put down the iPod, kid, and pick up a book

By [Lewis Page](#)

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In a development which confirms what many of us perhaps knew all along, research has shown that listening to music all the time as a teenager turns you into a doleful depressive (or alternatively that being a doleful depressive teenager makes you listen to music all the time). Youngsters who read, by contrast, tend to be in tiptop mental health.

Other forms of media - movies, TV etc - have no particular effect, according to Dr Brian Primack, medicine prof at Pittsburgh uni. But music listening is strongly linked to major depression, one of the most serious mental conditions, while reading is associated with a mind in the pink.

“At this point, it is not clear whether depressed people begin to listen to more music to escape, or whether listening to large amounts of music can lead to depression, or both. Either way, these findings may help clinicians and parents recognize links between media and depression,” says Dr Primack.

“It also is important that reading was associated with less likelihood of depression. This is worth emphasizing because overall in the US, reading books is decreasing, while nearly all other forms of media use are increasing.”

According to a statement issued yesterday by Pittsburgh uni:

The study involved 106 adolescent participants, 46 of whom were diagnosed with major depressive disorder...

The researchers found that young people who were exposed to the most music, compared to those who listened to music the least, were 8.3 times more likely to be depressed. However, compared to those with the least time exposed to books, those who read books the most were one-tenth as likely to be depressed. The other media exposures were not significantly associated with depression.

It seems that if your teenage offspring spend their time listening to less-fancied genres of music they may yet avoid depression. The study authors report that "major

depressive disorder is positively associated with *popular* music exposure" (our emphasis).

Those willing to stump up the subscription can read Primack and his colleagues' paper *Using Ecological Momentary Assessment to Determine Media Use by Individuals With and Without Major Depressive Disorder* [here](#) [1], published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*. ®

Links

1. <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/165/4/360?maxtoshow=&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=music&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=date&>

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